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PLANET
COMICS
No.57
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FICTION HOUSE
52 Pages
MAGAZINES
HUNT BOWMAN
Battles the spreading terror of Voltan Hordes
IN
The LOST WORLD
STAR PIRATE
Robin Hood of the spaceways
MYSTA
GODDESS OF THE MOON
FUTURA
Earth-girl cast into the World of Tomorrow

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A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

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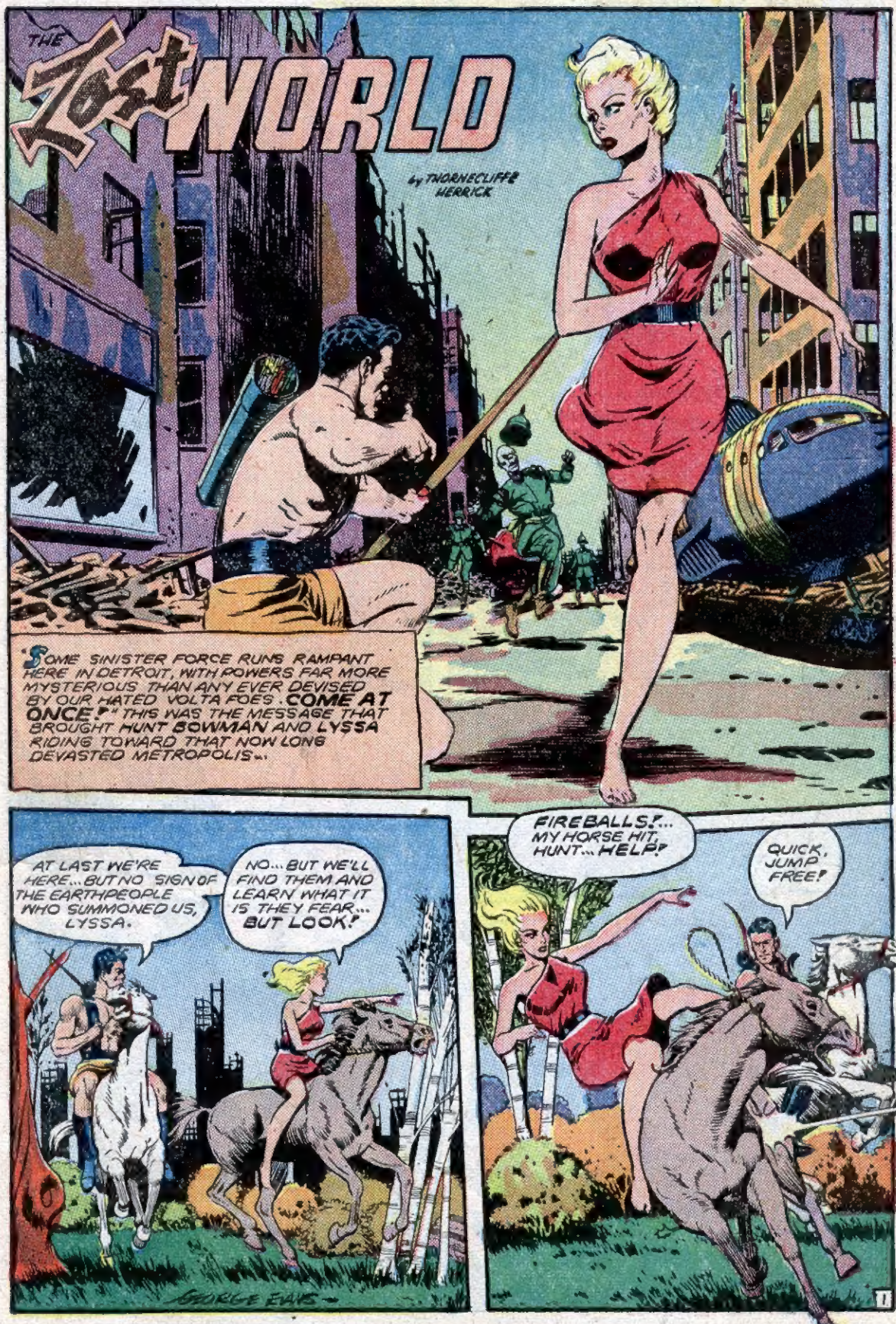
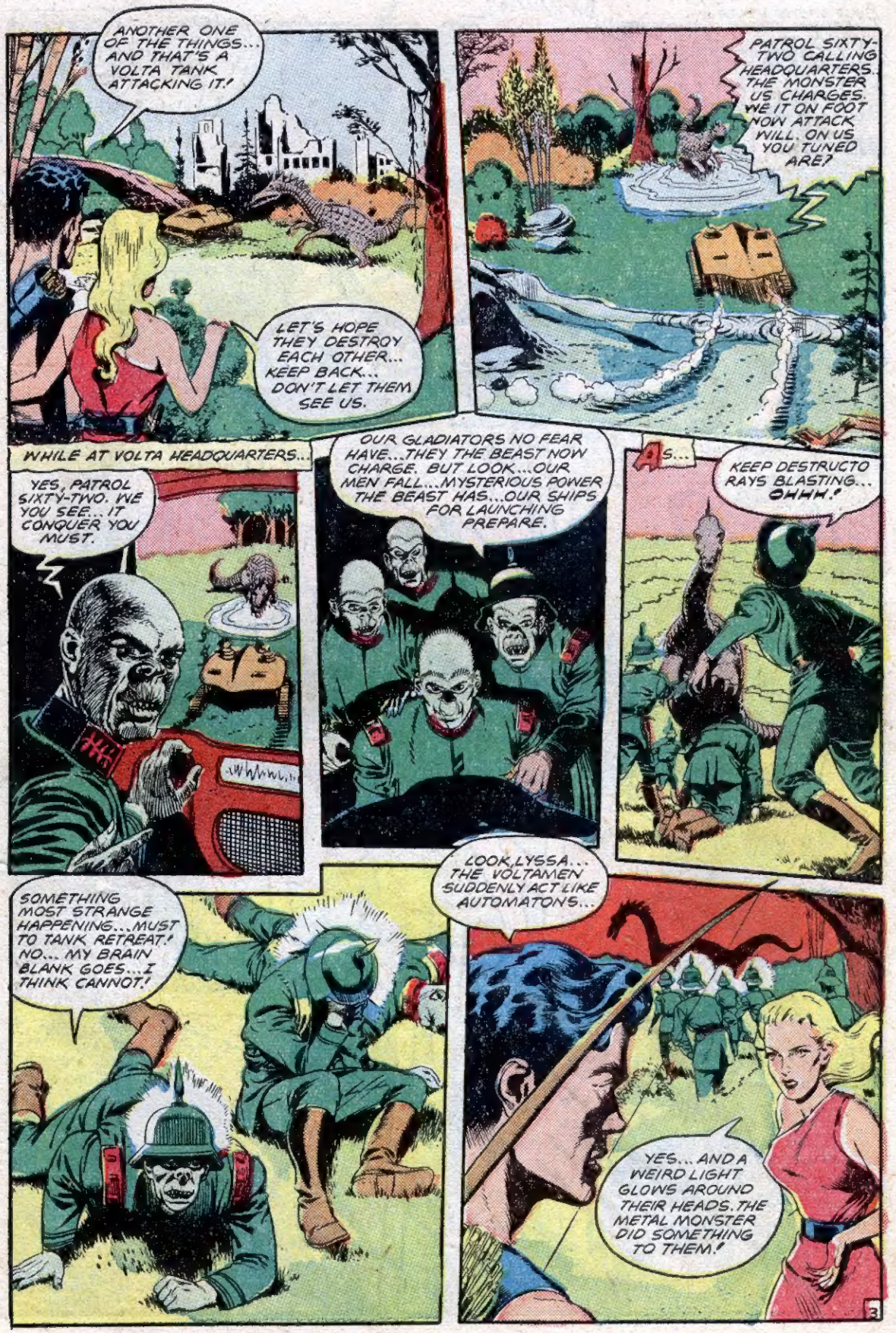
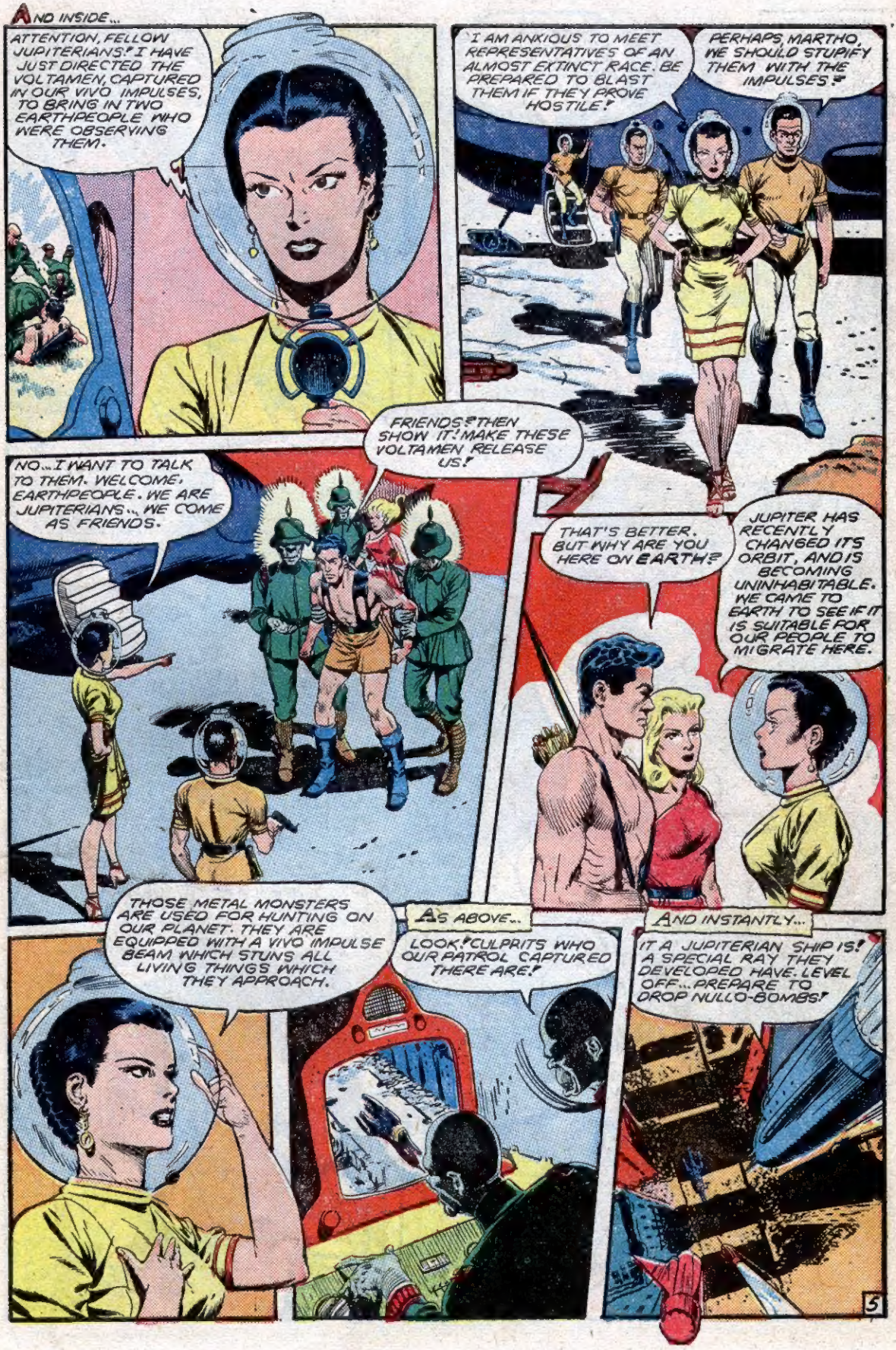

THE Lost WORLD
by THORNECLIFFE HERRICK
"SOME SINISTER FORCE RUNS RAMPANT HERE IN DETROIT, WITH POWERS FAR MORE MYSTERIOUS THAN ANY EVER DEVISED BY OUR HATED VOLTA FOES. COME AT ONCE!" THIS WAS THE MESSAGE THAT BROUGHT HUNT BOWMAN AND LYSSA RIDING TOWARD THAT NOW LONG DEVASTED METROPOLIS...
AT LAST WE'RE HERE... BUT NO SIGN OF THE EARTHPEOPLE WHO SUMMONED US, LYSSA.
NO... BUT WE'LL FIND THEM AND LEARN WHAT IT IS THEY FEAR... BUT LOOK!
GEORGE EVANS
FIREBALLS!... MY HORSE HIT, HUNT... HELP!
QUICK, JUMP FREE!
1

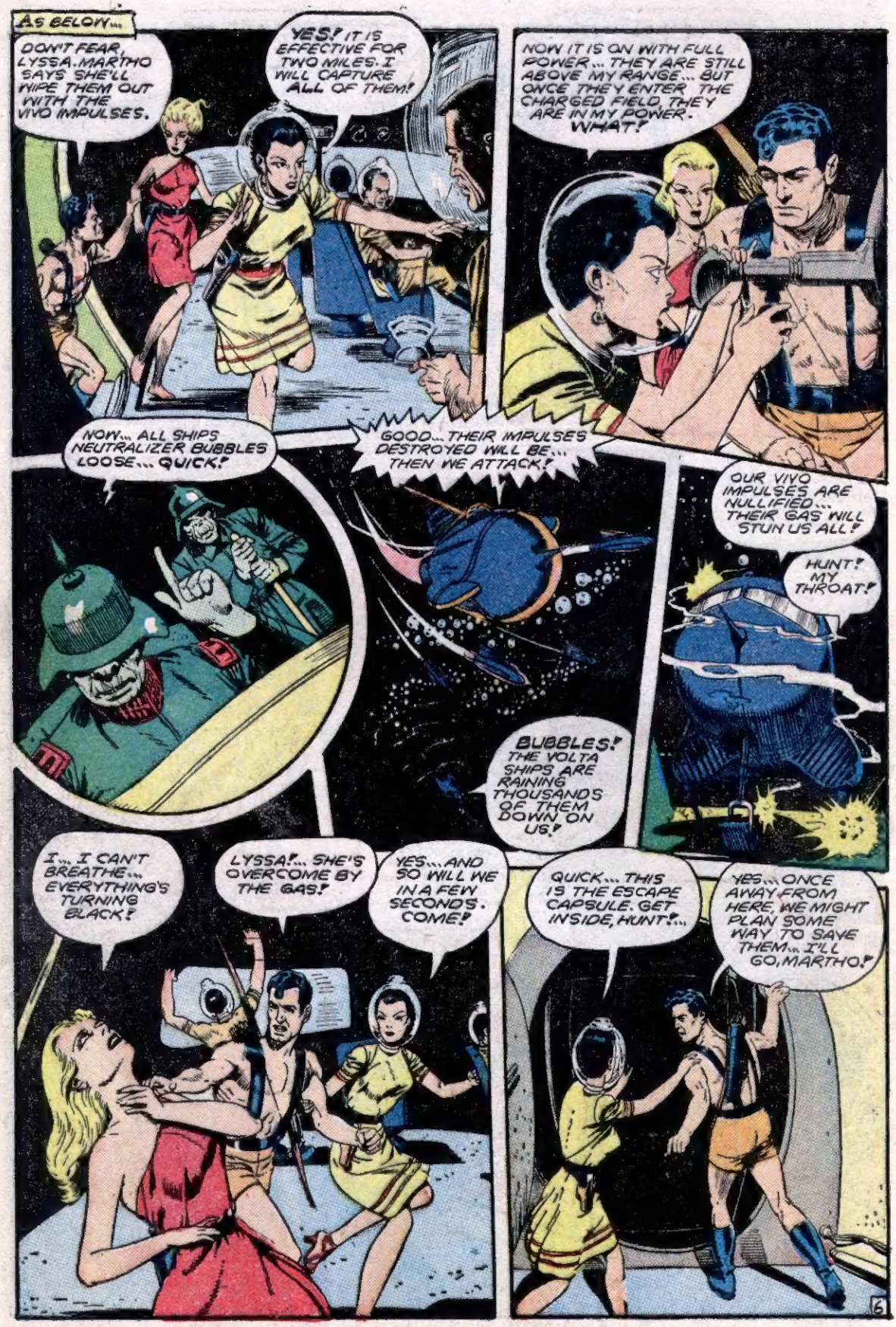
IT KILLED MY MOUNT...DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT WAS OR WHERE IT CAME FROM?
YES...THERE'S A MONSTER AHEAD IN THE CLEARING... GET UP!
AND SUDDENLY, THE THING WAS BEFORE THEM. WRITHING AND TWISTING... WITH FIRE FLASHES BURSTING FROM ITS LOATHSOME BODY...
WE CAN'T HOPE TO OUT-DISTANCE IT. I'VE GOT TO CHANCE AN ARROW!
YOU HIT IT...IT'S DYING, HUNT!
YES...BUT MY ARROW DIDN'T KILL IT...WHY, IT WASN'T ALIVE... IT'S MADE OF METAL!
YOU'RE RIGHT, HUNT, SOMETHING HAD ALREADY DAMAGED IT...THOSE SHOWERS OF FIREBALLS WERE SPARKS FROM ITS BROKEN MOTOR.
YES...BUT WHO BROUGHT IT HERE? LISTEN...THERE'S AN EXPLOSION— LET'S GO!
AS AHEAD..
VOLTA TANK PATROL SIXTY TWO TO MAIN BASE REPORTS. DESTROYED HAVE AND ANOTHER ATTACKS. YOUR VIDEO ON SWITCH AND US WATCH!
SEE...IT WE APPROACH...OUR GUNS NOW IT BLAST. STRANGE LIGHT CIRCLES FROM IT RADIATE!
2

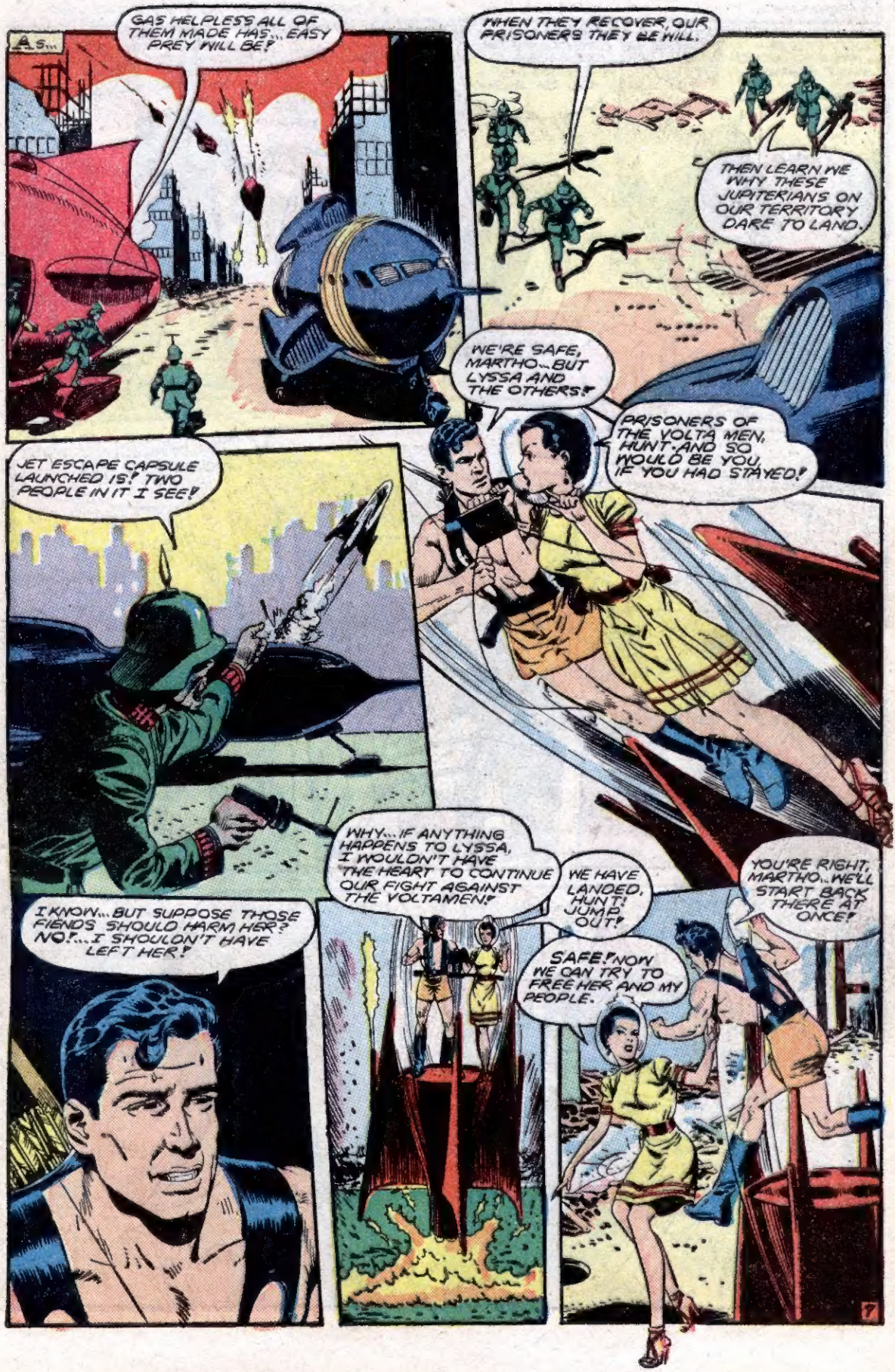

ANOTHER ONE OF THE THINGS... AND THAT'S A VOLTA TANK ATTACKING IT!
LET'S HOPE THEY DESTROY EACH OTHER... KEEP BACK... DON'T LET THEM SEE US.
PATROL SIXTY-TWO CALLING HEADQUARTERS. THE MONSTER US CHARGES. WE IT ON FOOT NOW ATTACK WILL. ON US YOU TUNED ARE?
WHILE AT VOLTA HEADQUARTERS...
YES, PATROL SIXTY-TWO. WE YOU SEE... IT CONQUER YOU MUST.
OUR GLADIATORS NO FEAR HAVE...THEY THE BEAST NOW CHARGE. BUT LOOK...OUR MEN FALL...MYSTERIOUS POWER THE BEAST HAS...OUR SHIPS FOR LAUNCHING PREPARE.
AS...
KEEP DESTRUCTO RAYS BLASTING... OHHH!
SOMETHING MOST STRANGE HAPPENING...MUST TO TANK RETREAT! NO... MY BRAIN BLANK GOES...I THINK CANNOT!
LOOK, LYSSA... THE VOLTAMEN SUDDENLY ACT LIKE AUTOMATONS...
YES... AND A WEIRD LIGHT GLOWS AROUND THEIR HEADS. THE METAL MONSTER DID SOMETHING TO THEM!
3

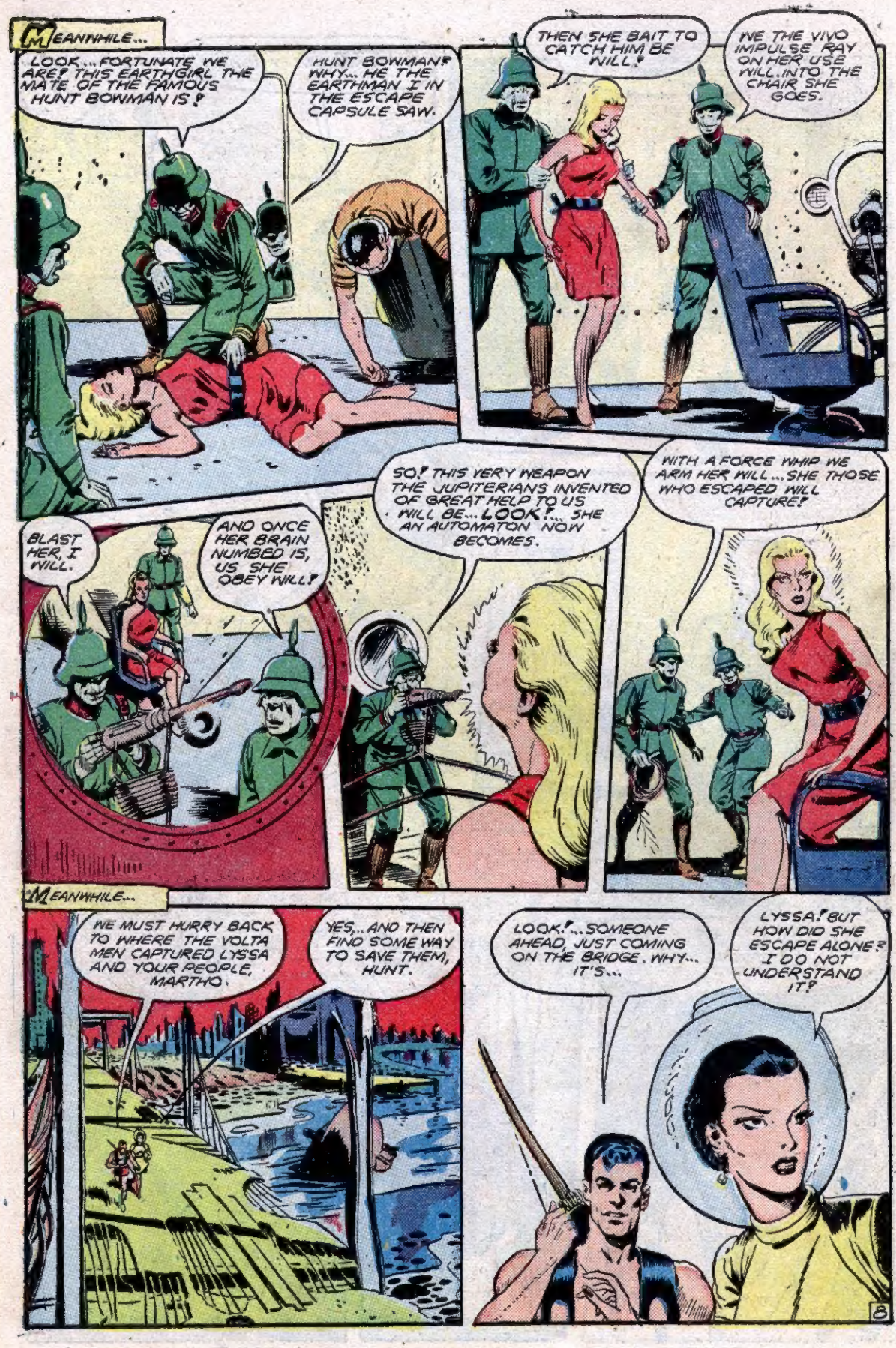
AND AT THE VOLTA LAUNCHING TOWER..
WE TO OUR COMRADES' AID MUST GO... ALL SHIPS US FOLLOW.
THEN A THUNDEROUS ROAR OF ROCKETS... AND THE LEAD SHIP SPIRALS SKYWARD...
AND THE HUGE MOVING BELT FEEDS ANOTHER CRAFT INTO THE CANNON-LIKE EJECTOR...
AS...
THEY SEE US, HUNT? RUN-RUN!
TOO LATE.. WE CAN'T ESCAPE... WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT!
THESE DEVILS SO STRONG... ACTING LIKE DUMMIES... THEY'VE GOT LYSSA!
WE'VE LOST.. TOO MANY OF THEM... GOT TO SURRENDER!
MEANWHILE, IN A DISTANT CLEARING, A NEW AND STRANGE TYPE OF SPACE SHIP LIES SECURELY ANCHORED.
4

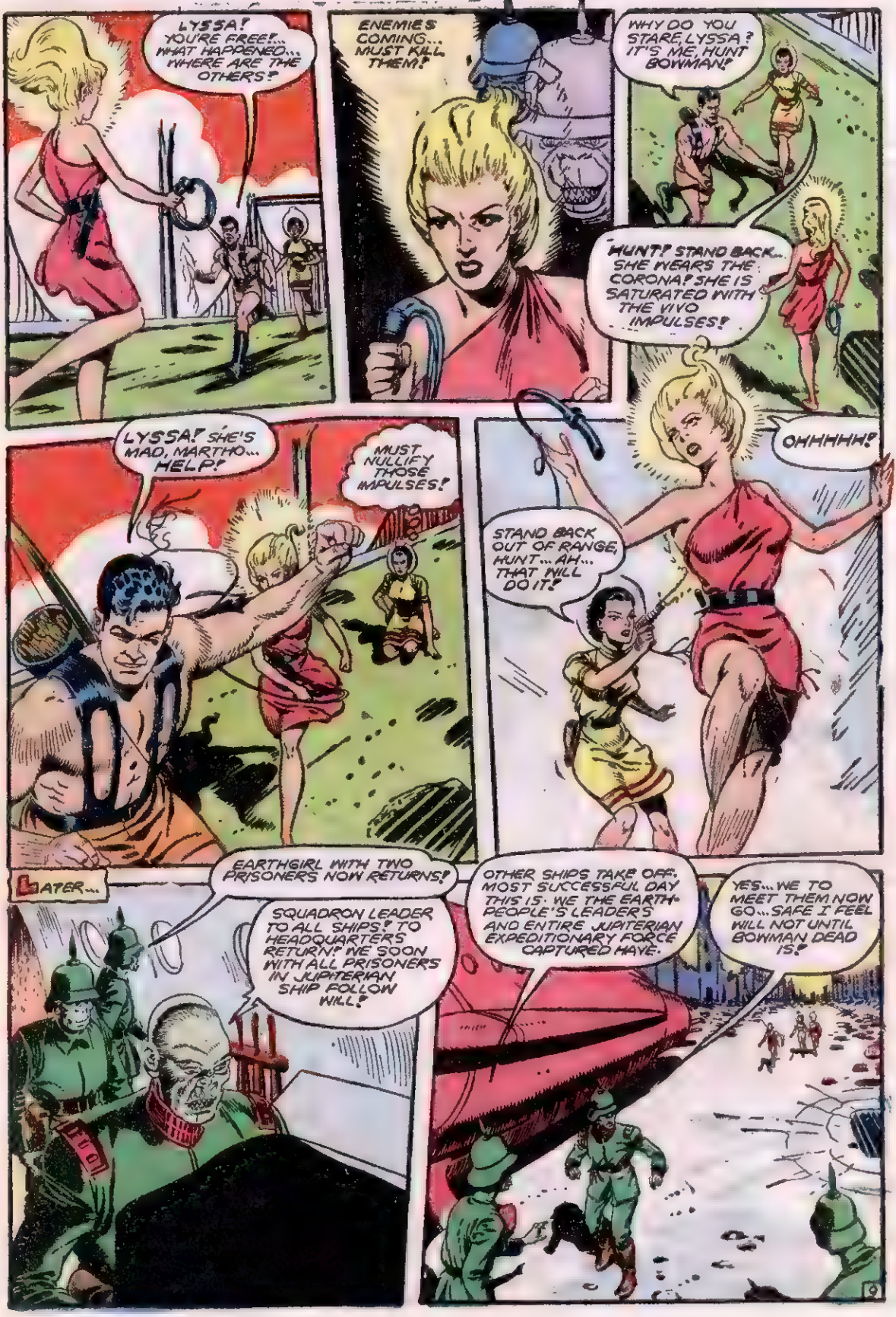
AND INSIDE...


ATTENTION, FELLOW JUPITERIANS! I HAVE JUST DIRECTED THE VOLTAMEN, CAPTURED IN OUR VIVO IMPULSES, TO BRING IN TWO EARTHPEOPLE WHO WERE OBSERVING THEM.
"I AM ANXIOUS TO MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF AN ALMOST EXTINCT RACE. BE PREPARED TO BLAST THEM IF THEY PROVE HOSTILE!
PERHAPS, MARTHO, WE SHOULD STUPIFY THEM WITH THE IMPULSES!
FRIENDS? THEN SHOW IT! MAKE THESE VOLTAMEN RELEASE US!
NO... I WANT TO TALK TO THEM. WELCOME, EARTHPEOPLE. WE ARE JUPITERIANS... WE COME AS FRIENDS.
THAT'S BETTER. BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE ON EARTH?
JUPITER HAS RECENTLY CHANGED ITS ORBIT, AND IS BECOMING UNINHABITABLE. WE CAME TO EARTH TO SEE IF IT IS SUITABLE FOR OUR PEOPLE TO MIGRATE HERE.
THOSE METAL MONSTERS ARE USED FOR HUNTING ON OUR PLANET. THEY ARE EQUIPPED WITH A VIVO IMPULSE BEAM WHICH STUNS ALL LIVING THINGS WHICH THEY APPROACH.
AS ABOVE...
LOOK! CULPRITS WHO OUR PATROL CAPTURED THERE ARE!
AND INSTANTLY...
IT A JUPITERIAN SHIP IS! A SPECIAL RAY THEY DEVELOPED HAVE. LEVEL OFF... PREPARE TO DROP NULLO-BOMBS!


AS BELOW...
DON'T FEAR, LYSSA. MARTHO SAYS SHE'LL WIPE THEM OUT WITH THE VIVO IMPULSES.
YES! IT IS EFFECTIVE FOR TWO MILES. I WILL CAPTURE ALL OF THEM!
NOW IT IS ON WITH FULL POWER... THEY ARE STILL ABOVE MY RANGE... BUT ONCE THEY ENTER THE CHARGED FIELD, THEY ARE IN MY POWER. WHAT!
NOW... ALL SHIPS NEUTRALIZER BUBBLES LOOSE... QUICK!
GOOD... THEIR IMPULSES DESTROYED WILL BE... THEN WE ATTACK!
OUR VIVO IMPULSES ARE NULLIFIED... THEIR GAS WILL STUN US ALL!
HUNT! MY THROAT!
BUBBLES! THE VOLTA SHIPS ARE RAINING THOUSANDS OF THEM DOWN ON US!
I... I CAN'T BREATHE... EVERYTHING'S TURNING BLACK!
LYSSA!... SHE'S OVERCOME BY THE GAS!
YES... AND SO WILL WE IN A FEW SECONDS. COME!
QUICK... THIS IS THE ESCAPE CAPSULE. GET INSIDE, HUNT!...
YES... ONCE AWAY FROM HERE, WE MIGHT PLAN SOME WAY TO SAVE THEM... I'LL GO, MARTHO!
6


GAS HELPLESS ALL OF THEM MADE HAS... EASY PREY WILL BE!
WHEN THEY RECOVER OUR PRISONERS THEY BE WILL.
THEN LEARN WE WHY THESE JUPITERIANS ON OUR TERRITORY DARE TO LAND.
WE'RE SAFE, MARTHO... BUT LYSSA AND THE OTHERS!
PRISONERS OF THE VOLTA MEN, HUNT. AND SO WOULD BE YOU, IF YOU HAD STAYED!
JET ESCAPE CAPSULE LAUNCHED IS! TWO PEOPLE IN IT I SEE!
WHY... IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO LYSSA, I WOULDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO CONTINUE OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE VOLTAMEN!
WE HAVE LANDED, HUNT! JUMP OUT!
YOU'RE RIGHT, MARTHO... WE'LL START BACK THERE AT ONCE!
I KNOW... BUT SUPPOSE THOSE FIENDS SHOULD HARM HER? NO!... I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT HER!
SAFE! NOW WE CAN TRY TO FREE HER AND MY PEOPLE.
7


MEANWHILE...
LOOK... FORTUNATE WE ARE! THIS EARTHGIRL THE MATE OF THE FAMOUS HUNT BOWMAN IS!
HUNT BOWMAN? WHY... HE THE EARTHMAN I IN THE ESCAPE CAPSULE SAW.
THEN SHE BAIT TO CATCH HIM BE WILL!
WE THE VIVO IMPULSE RAY ON HER USE WILL. INTO THE CHAIR SHE GOES.
BLAST HER, I WILL.
AND ONCE HER BRAIN NUMBED IS, US SHE OBEY WILL!
SO! THIS YERY WEAPON THE JUPITERIANS INVENTED OF GREAT HELP TO US WILL BE... LOOK!... SHE AN AUTOMATON NOW BECOMES.
WITH A FORCE WHIP WE ARM HER WILL... SHE THOSE WHO ESCAPED WILL CAPTURE!
MEANWHILE...
WE MUST HURRY BACK TO WHERE THE VOLTA MEN CAPTURED LYSSA AND YOUR PEOPLE, MARTHO.
YES,.. AND THEN FIND SOME WAY TO SAVE THEM, HUNT.
LOOK!... SOMEONE AHEAD, JUST COMING ON THE BRIDGE. WHY... IT'S...
LYSSA! BUT HOW DID SHE ESCAPE ALONE? I DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT!
8

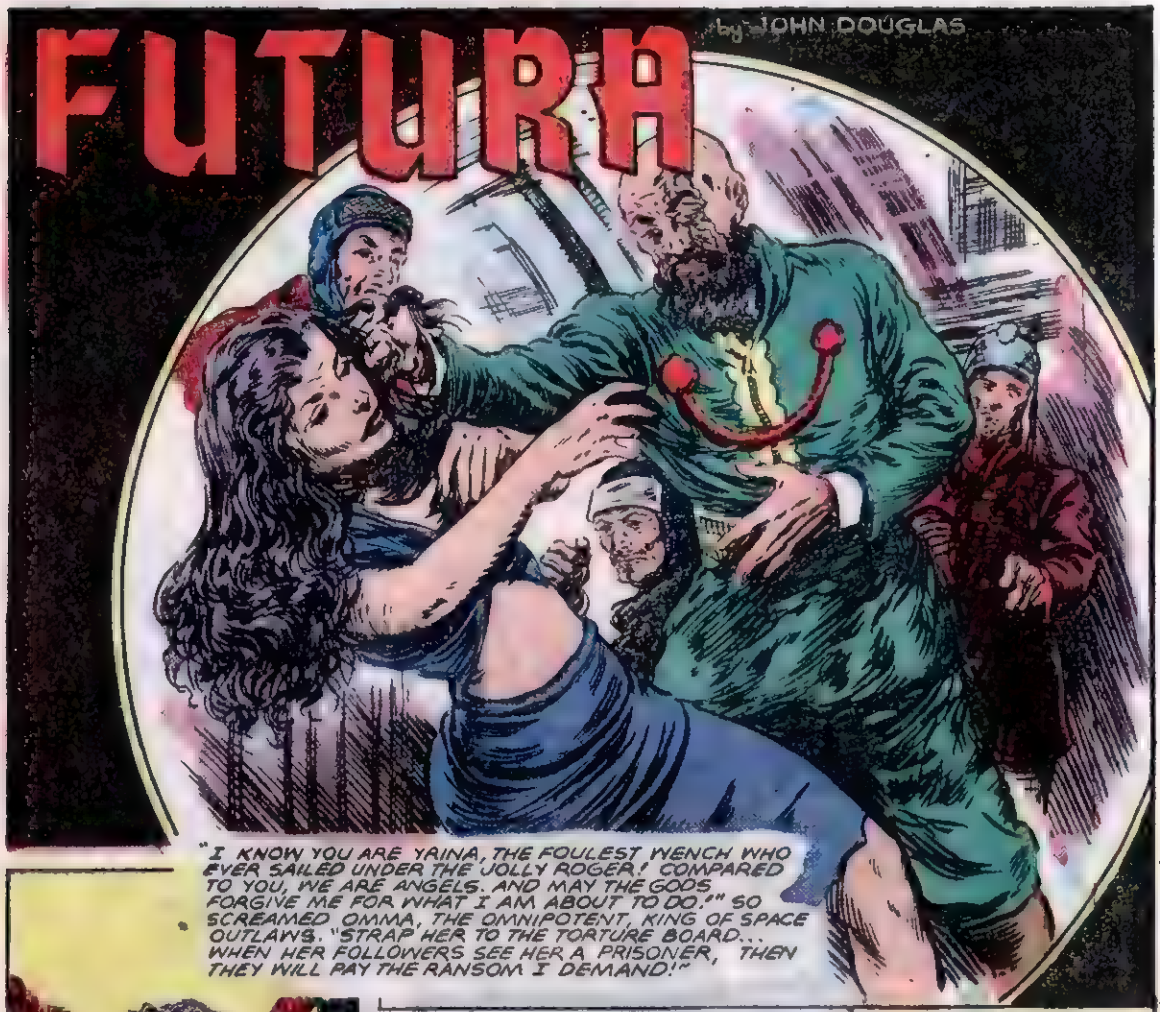

LYSSA! YOU'RE FREE!... WHAT HAPPENED... WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
ENEMIES COMING... MUST KILL THEM!
WHY DO YOU STARE, LYSSA? IT'S ME, HUNT BOWMAN!
"HUNT!" STAND BACK... SHE WEARS THE CORONA! SHE IS SATURATED WITH THE VIVO IMPULSES!
LYSSA! SHE'S MAD, MARTHO... HELP!
MUST NULLIFY THOSE IMPULSES!
OHHHHH!
STAND BACK OUT OF RANGE, HUNT... AH... THAT WILL DO IT!
LATER...
EARTHGIRL WITH TWO PRISONERS NOW RETURNS!
SQUADRON LEADER TO ALL SHIPS! TO HEADQUARTERS RETURN! WE SOON WITH ALL PRISONERS IN JUPITERIAN SHIP FOLLOW WILL!
OTHER SHIPS TAKE OFF. MOST SUCCESSFUL DAY THIS IS. WE THE EARTH-PEOPLE'S LEADERS AND ENTIRE JUPITERIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE CAPTURED HAVE.
YES... WE TO MEET THEM NOW GO... SAFE I FEEL WILL NOT UNTIL BOWMAN DEAD IS!
9

LOOK!... HE MOVES! PARALYZED HE IS NOT! BLAST HIM!
QUICK, MARTHO, I'LL HOLD THEM OFF... GET TO THE SHIP!
HUNT DID IT! HE GIVES ME THE CHANCE I NEED. ONCE I GET MY HANDS ON OUR VIVO-IMPULSE GUN, I WILL WIPE THEM ALL OUT!
THERE! I HAVE KN... ED OUT THOSE WHO WERE ATTACKING HUNT... NOW TO GET THE SPACE SHIPS!
AND INSTANTLY THE DEADLY RAY SPEARS SKYWARD...
...SWEEPS THE UNSUSPECTING VOLTA SHIPS ONE BY ONE.
AND LATER...
WE MUST LEAVE NOW, HUNT.. AND I HOPE MY REPORT TO THE JUPITERIANS WILL INFLUENCE THEM TO COLONIZE HERE ON EARTH.
WE WOULD WELCOME SUCH STOUT-HEARTED ALLIES TO HELP US FIGHT THE VOLTAMEN. GOODBYE, MARTHO!
THEY'RE GONE, LYSSA. NOW WE MUST CONTACT THE EARTH-PEOPLE WHO SUMMONED US, AND EXPLAIN ABOUT THE JUPITERIANS AND THEIR VIVO-IMPULSE RAY.
YES, HUNT... I'M GLAD THEY'VE LEFT. I DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY MARTHO LOOKED AT YOU!

LOST WORLD IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!?

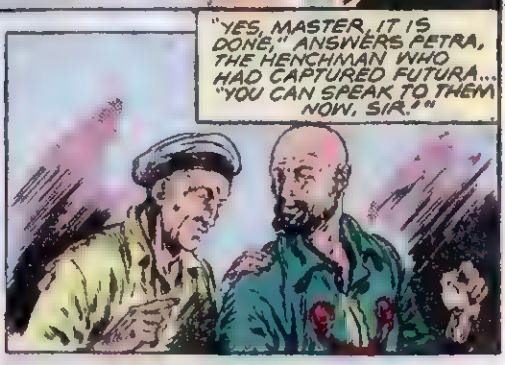
FUTURA

by JOHN DOUGLAS

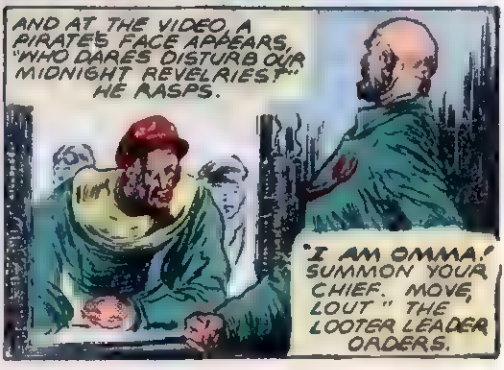


"I KNOW YOU ARE YRINA, THE FOULEST WENCH WHO EVER SAILED UNDER THE JOLLY ROGER! COMPARED TO YOU, WE ARE ANGELS. AND MAY THE GODS FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO!" SO SCREAMED OMMA, THE OMNIPOTENT, KING OF SPACE OUTLAWS. "STRAP HER TO THE TORTURE BOARD... WHEN HER FOLLOWERS SEE HER A PRISONER, THEN THEY WILL PAY THE RANSOM I DEMAND!"

BUT IT IS FUTURA, THE EARTHGIRL, WHO HEARS HIS HORRIBLE TAUNTS.. HER DENIALS GO UNHEEDED AS HE SHOUTS, "TUNE IN YRINA'S RENDEZVOUS. I WILL TALK TO HER LIEUTENANT."



"YES, MASTER, IT IS DONE," ANSWERS PETRA, THE HENCHMAN WHO HAD CAPTURED FUTURA... "YOU CAN SPEAK TO THEM NOW, SIR."



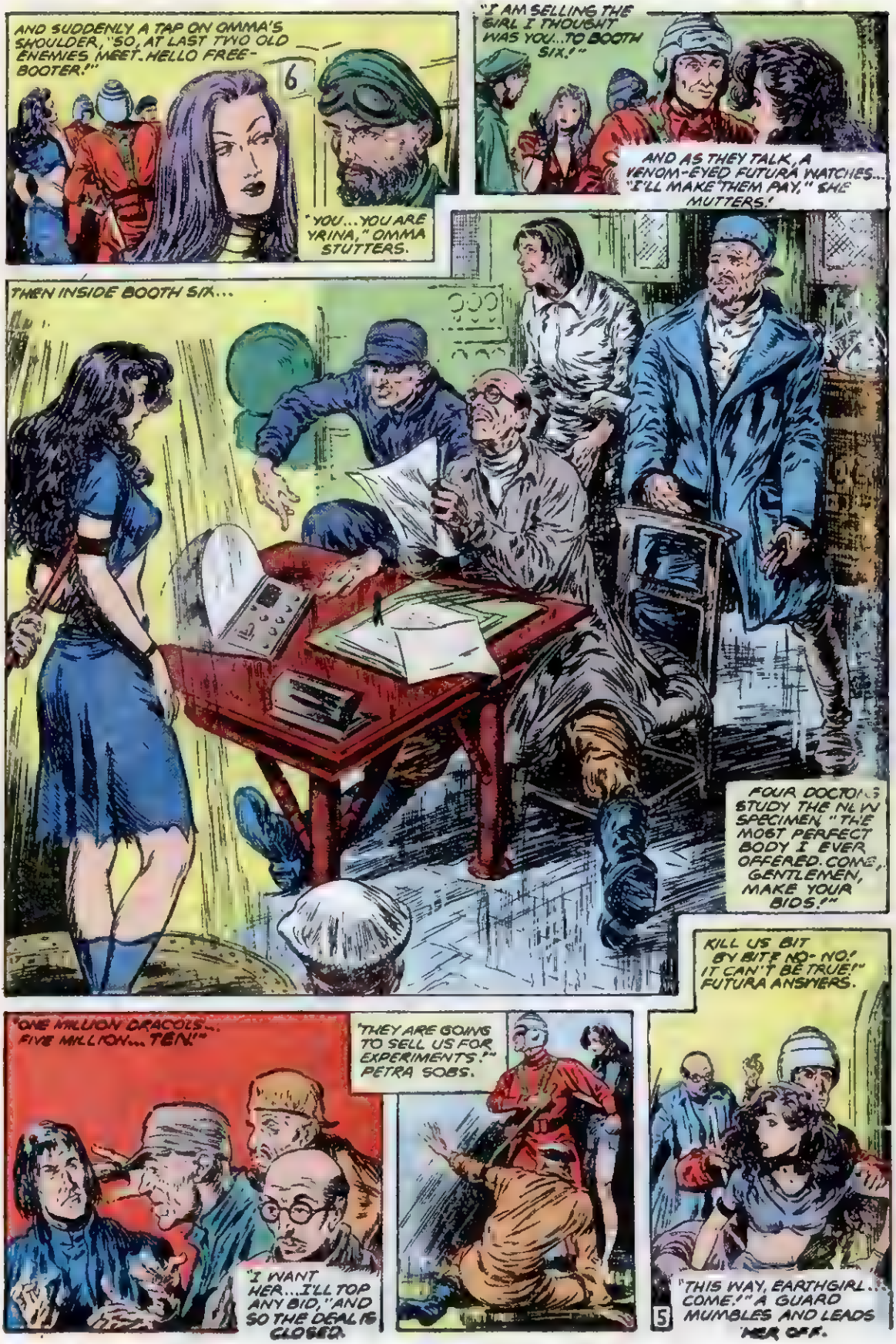
AND AT THE VIDEO, A PIRATE'S FACE APPEARS, "WHO DARES DISTURB OUR MIDNIGHT REVELRIES?" HE RASPS.

"I AM OMMA! SUMMON YOUR CHIEF. MOVE, LOUT!" THE LOOTER LEADER ORDERS.

SO THE MESSENGER RUSHES TO THE GAMING TABLE WHERE THE REAL YRINA SITS, "WHY DO YOU INTERRUPT ME?" SHE DEMANDS.
"OMMA CONTACTS US...HE IS ON THE VIDEO! LISTEN TO HIM... LOOK AT HIM!"
"I AM YRINA! YOU'VE BEEN FOOLED, OMMA. SHE IS A NOBODY WHO I CHANGED PLACES WITH TO ESCAPE THE LAWMEN!"
THEN SHE TURNS, SEES OMMA... HEARS HIS GLOATING VOICE...
"FOR A MILLION DRECULAS I RELEASE YOUR QUEEN - BUT... WHO ARE YOU?"
"YOU, PETRA, YOU FOOL! YOU BROUGHT HER ABOARD MY SHIP...YOU TOLD ME SHE WAS THE PIRATE QUEEN!" OMMA SCREAMS.
THEN SOUNDS OF TERROR SHOUTS...AND PISTOL-SHARP REPORTS FROM THE SNAPPING WHIP... FUTURA'S TORTURED SENSES CLEAR... SHE STIRS...
...THEN LUNGES FORWARD."SCUM OF SATURN'S UNHOLY SWAMPS," SHE SHOUTS,"BULLY!... BLASPHEMER! LET THAT MAN GO!"
INSTANTLY...GNARLED MURDERERS' HANDS CLUTCH HER SOFT WHITE SKIN AND HOLD HER HELPLESS!
"TAKE HER OFF ME! HELP!" THE OUTLAW SHRIEKS!
2

SO THE FUTILE STRUGGLE ENDS. MORE ORDERS FROM THE ODIOUS OMMA... AND HIS SPACECRAFT GLIDES TOWARD THE OUTLAW PLANETOID... THE RENDEZVOUS OF OUTCASTS... WICKED HAVEN OF CRIMINALS AND THEIR CRONIES.
LONG MONOTONOUS SPACE MILES...AND FINALLY THE LONG, SLEEK SHIP HEADS DOWNWARD...
...WHERE, INSTANT RECOGNITION, "UNCOVER THE LANDING FIELD," THE LOOKOUT ORDERS. "OMMA APPROACHES!"
OUT STRUTS THE ARROGANT SPOILER-CALLS TO HIS GUARDS, "TO THE SCREEN ROOM WITH FUTURA AND PETRA...HURRY!"
THEN IN THE CUSTOM CHAMBERS...IDENTIFICATION 7ASS...DUTY PAID BY OMMA... AND THERE, AN OFFICER THRILLS AT FUTURA'S BEAUTY... CLASPS HER, WHISPERS...
"I WILL BEG, BORROW AND STEAL TO BUY YOU, EARTHGIRL... YOU WILL BE MY SLAVE...AND NOW A KISS!"
"NEVER...TAKE YOUR SLIMY PAWS OFF ME," SHE CRIES...
...AND SHOUTS OF "BRAVO!" FROM THE ONLOOKERS. "THAT GIRL HAS SPUNK!"
"SHE KNOWS NOT WHAT'S IN STORE FOR HER...BUT LET HER GO WITH OMMA...YES, LET HER GO TO THE MARKET PLACE," THE ENRAGED OFFICER MUTTERS.
3

FLESH DISINTEGRATOR APPARATUS.
SLAVES FOR SALE.
OUTLAWED TORTURE DEVICES.
SO FUTURA IS LED AWAY...THROUGH THE MARKET OF FORBIDDEN TREASURES...AND AS SHE PASSES THE BOOTHS SHE STARES IN HORROR AND AMAZEMENT AT THE WEIRD AND UNNATURAL DISPLAYS...
ROBOTS.
MONSTERS FROM STRANGE WORLDS.
"THEY ARE ALL FOR SALE, BUY! BUY! BUY!" THE BARKER SHOUTS, "AND EVERY ONE A BARGAIN!"
CONTRABAND WEAPONS.
SMALL OUTLAWED ARMORED TANKS.
MINIATURE LIVING SIRENS FROM NEPTUNE.


AND SUDDENLY A TAP ON OMMA'S SHOULDER, "SO, AT LAST TWO OLD ENEMIES MEET. HELLO FREE-BOOTER!"
6
"YOU...YOU ARE YRINA," OMMA STUTTERS.
"I AM SELLING THE GIRL I THOUGHT WAS YOU...TO BOOTH SIX!"
AND AS THEY TALK, A VENOM-EYED FUTURA WATCHES... "I'LL MAKE THEM PAY," SHE MUTTERS!
THEN INSIDE BOOTH SIX...
FOUR DOCTORS STUDY THE NEW SPECIMEN. "THE MOST PERFECT BODY I EVER OFFERED. COME, GENTLEMEN, MAKE YOUR BIDS!"
KILL US BIT BY BIT? NO- NO! IT CAN'T BE TRUE!" FUTURA ANSWERS.
"ONE MILLION DRACOLS... FIVE MILLION... TEN!"
"I WANT HER...I'LL TOP ANY BID," AND SO THE DEAL IS CLOSED.
"THEY ARE GOING TO SELL US FOR EXPERIMENTS!" PETRA SOBS.
"THIS WAY, EARTHGIRL... COME!" A GUARD MUMBLES AND LEADS HER OFF.
5

WHERE A MULTI-BILLIONAIRESS FROM JUPITER LAYS MUTILATED FROM A SPACE SHIP CRACK UP. "RESTORE HER BODY!... I'LL PAY ANY PRICE!" HER HUSBAND PLEADS...
...THEN TURNS AS FUTURA IS FORCED FORWARD, "THIS ONE? YES, BUT GET TO WORK—NOW REPLACE MY WIFE'S DAMAGED CELLS WITH HER HEALTHY ONES!"
"NATURALLY THE SLAVE WILL DIE...AND THE OPERATION IS MOST COSTLY..."
"TWENTY MILLION DRACOLS THE PRICE?...CERTAINLY I'LL PAY, BUT GET TO WORK!"
"THAT'S ME THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT...WHY THOSE FOUL FIENDISH GHOULS!" FUTURA LURCHES FROM HER GUARD...
BUTCHERS, DEMONS MASQUERADING IN HUMAN BODIES! I'LL STRIP THE SKIN FROM YOUR BONES!"
...BUTCHER NAN-GI TURNS TOWARD HER STARTLED TORMENTORS...
AND SO THE SLAVE CHAIN SINGS AND BITES...PLUCKS EYES, TEARS FLESH, BREAKS SKULLS...
6

MERCY CRIES GO UNHEEDED... AS AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN THE CHAIN BITES BONE... THEN, A LEVELED RAY GUN POINTS TOWARD HER...
BUT SHE SEES IT... TURNS... AGAIN CHAIN-CLINKS RATTLE. "I'LL TAKE THAT GUN."
AND OUTSIDE, A MOTLEY MOB STANDS STUNNED... STARES BUG-EYED... EDGES CLOSER TO LISTEN TO THE TURMOIL... AND SEES NOT THE EARTHGIRL SLIP FROM THE DOORWAY... CREEP OFF AMONG THEM.
ONE SINGLE BLAST AND THE LIGHT IS SHATTERED... "NOW IS MY CHANCE!... I WILL ESCAPE!" THEN DARKNESS ENVELOPES THE ROOM.
"SHE'S GONE!" OMMA CRINGES... "YOU AND I MUST BE ON THE LOOKOUT!"
"YES," YRINA ANSWERS. "BUT COME... I KNOW A PLACE TO HIDE."
BUT IN A NEARBY BOOTH, A CLOAKED FUTURA WATCHES, THE SNIVELING PROPRIETOR A CAPTIVE AT HER FEET. "WHEREVER THEY GO... WHATEVER THEY DO... I WILL FIND THEM!" SHE MURMERS.

FUTURA APPEARS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

A THING OF BEAUTY

By THORNECLIFFE HERRICK

NO one had been to earth in eons. Really too bad, reflected Tak Rikor, strumming a row of impulse buttons. But he would get there—if it was the last thing he ever did. I have enough time, one hundred years at least, he considered. Yes, the faultless precision of Martian science had determined an exact and unerring life span for its chemically perfect citizens. Two hundred years. He had half his life to live.

Tak Rikor was considered slightly odd on Mars. He didn't seem entirely happy with the supremely perfect way of life that the wonders of Martian science had created. No disease, no pain—and death came only as it came to the one horse shay. One's parts merely collapsed all at once. After two hundred years.

No worry, no poverty, no riches, no sadness, no . . . *oops!* . . . *only* happiness. It had not come all at once—age upon age of mathematical shaping and moulding, until at last life had the symmetry of an equilateral triangle. The conquest of science, the victory of the algebraic equation, the triumph of the slide rule. Life had reached an ultimate. There could be no more, no less. Then why was Tak Rikor unhappy (horrible word)? What cog had broken and bungled the machinery?

Only Tak Rikor knew. And also knew that it had all happened on earth centuries on centuries before. Science had developed and ruled till the enevitable cog snapped and the machinery had gone berserk. Science had had a long fight, finally won, only to lose again.

It was all moldy history. The weak, firecracker burst of the first atom bomb. Then the control and manufacture of every element. Funny, *they* only had ninety two to start with. Weren't they proud to brag of three hundred somewhere near the beginning of the twenty-third century! Next, the faultless, mathematical control of everything. Just like Mars now, Tak thought, a little startled and amused by the reflection. Not so polished, not so *happy*, he added assuredly, but they had the idea of the thing.

Then some fool had gummed the works. That's what you get by having no controls—any kindergarten chemical student knew you had to have controls in an experiment, and naturally every scientific activity is an experiment. But they had no controls and the fool ruined everything. *He* had seized control.

It was quite an explosion when it happened. The seismic recorders on a dozen planets had shaken like jelly. The fool had blown up the world.

Then the desert age on earth. Vast centuries of barren life when struggling man relived the crude cave existence of his prehistoric ancestors. The long struggle to begin civilization anew—from the very bottom. Yet they had learned a lesson—or thought they had. Fragments of the old books, stray scraps of cine film, cracked plasta records had helped them piece together the history of the science age. No more of that for them. No, science was out. A new philosophy ruled.

The artists had raved and ranted in the great machine age, complained and bickered about the godless mechanics that held sway. They had cursed man as a creature without soul—a thing who lived without beauty, whose only appreciation was for a smooth-gliding syno-piston. Now the artists and philosophers had their chance.

No more machines. Only beauty ruled. It was the natural, violent reaction to the curse of the machine demon that had nearly destroyed their very existence. A faith in truth, beauty, art replaced the dogma of mathematics. One concession to science only remained. It was purely protective—a fume net of poisonous stratosphere that enveloped earth high above the ground surface. No

outsiders, no outerspace creatures that might bring in the horror of a machine was to disturb them.

Highly developed voice responders had picked up their talk and sounds on the outer planets. And these—including the science monitors on Mars—had laughed heartily at the insane doings on the hermit planet Earth. Tak Rikor had heard and laughed also at first. But now the odd mode of existence on earth fascinated him. He had to get there, he must see it all with his own eyes.

Such a fabulous life they led. Beauty ruled with as fierce a hand as ever the machine god had. Every thought, every act of the earthlings was devoted to it. Ugliness was stamped out where it showed the least hint of appearing. Ugly trees, ugly houses—and even ugly *people*—were ruthlessly exterminated. Tak Rikor had heard it all. First ugly babies were sifted, sampled and judged as to their prospects of growing to maturity in the high standard of beauty demanded. Then, as they sprouted taller in youth, new judging, new decrees and those who could not pass the tests were exterminated, burned, killed, every trace of them destroyed.

The picture grew on Tak Rikor. A population of fabulous beauty. His inner eye gleamed to conjure up visions of the womanhood of this extraordinary planet—such dazzling, suprastunning creatures they must be. Yes, yes, Tak Rikor pounded his atolab desk, he must go to earth.

The greatest difficulty had been overcome. A dynosled with pore-sealed side slabs to penetrate the fume wall about earth. He was actually ready. Except for one thing. What of his reception on earth? Would they not exterminate an outsider? He had studied his features in a mirror—Tak Rikor was not precisely ugly, but would he measure up to the fabulous earth standards? Something else, a card up his sleeve, a gift of appeasement, that's what he must have. Eros was his answer—Eros, his wife, the reigning beauty of Mars. Naturally, she was not fully appreciated in the mech-functional life of Mars, but Tak Rikor had recognized her loveliness. He had seen the sly looks in machine eyes when stern council judges weren't looking. Together they would be the first outsiders to penetrate earth's mysteries in countless ages.

* * *

It was later now. The smooth, chem-tile shell of his dyno-sled had slid through the dank poison-haze with ease. He was slipping his ship to a grating halt on a deserted spaceport field. Funny—no spacers in sight. And then he remembered: no machines on earth.

Tak Rikor and his beautiful wife hopped to the ragged ground of the field. Silence was their welcome. Were the earthlings indifferent to intruders? Through an unseen error had outer space misinterpreted their philosophy of beauty and seclusion?

Then they came. First, a low distant hum of voice sounds. A slow swelling to an outraged roar of anger. The earthlings burst upon them. Tak Rikor stood thunderstruck, unable to shift a muscle of his tensed body. It was not their anger, their rage, their unleashed passion to murder him as an outworlder invading their domain of lonely beauty that staggered him—it was the astounding unholy sight of them!

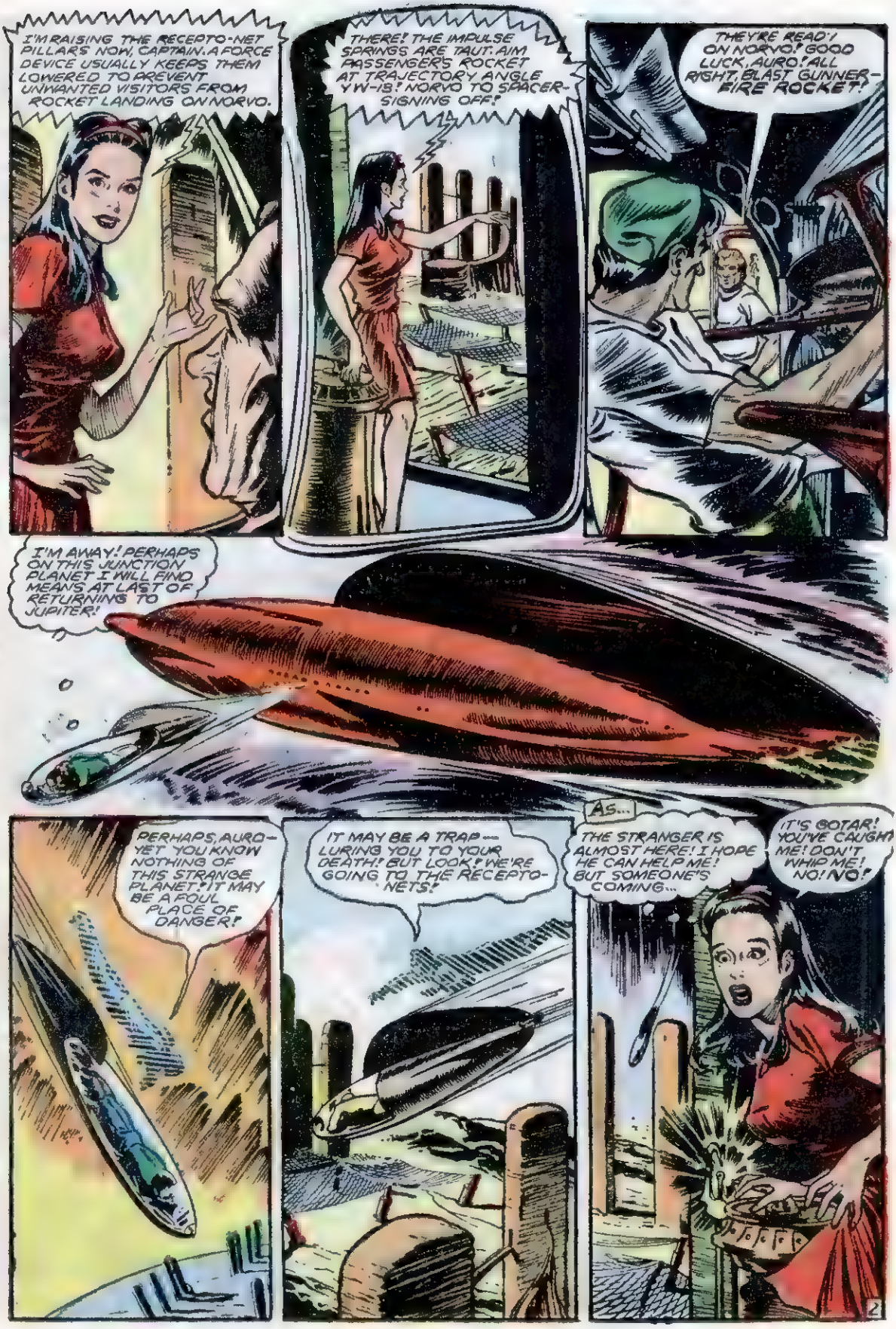
Beauty! He roared in hoarse, hysterical laughter! Why, what had childish, elemental history taught? Beauty refined without truth—what standard was left? And what, pray, was beauty at all? He grimaced and shuddered at this descending horde.

Beautiful? The ghastly, supernatural repulsiveness of every last one of them was a hideous spectacle beyond his wildest dreams. Beauty dissolved into decadence. Beauty for itself, sagging and degrading into ugliness. Beauty worshiped without heart, without soul. Beauty adored with the emptiness the machine-love had once inspired.

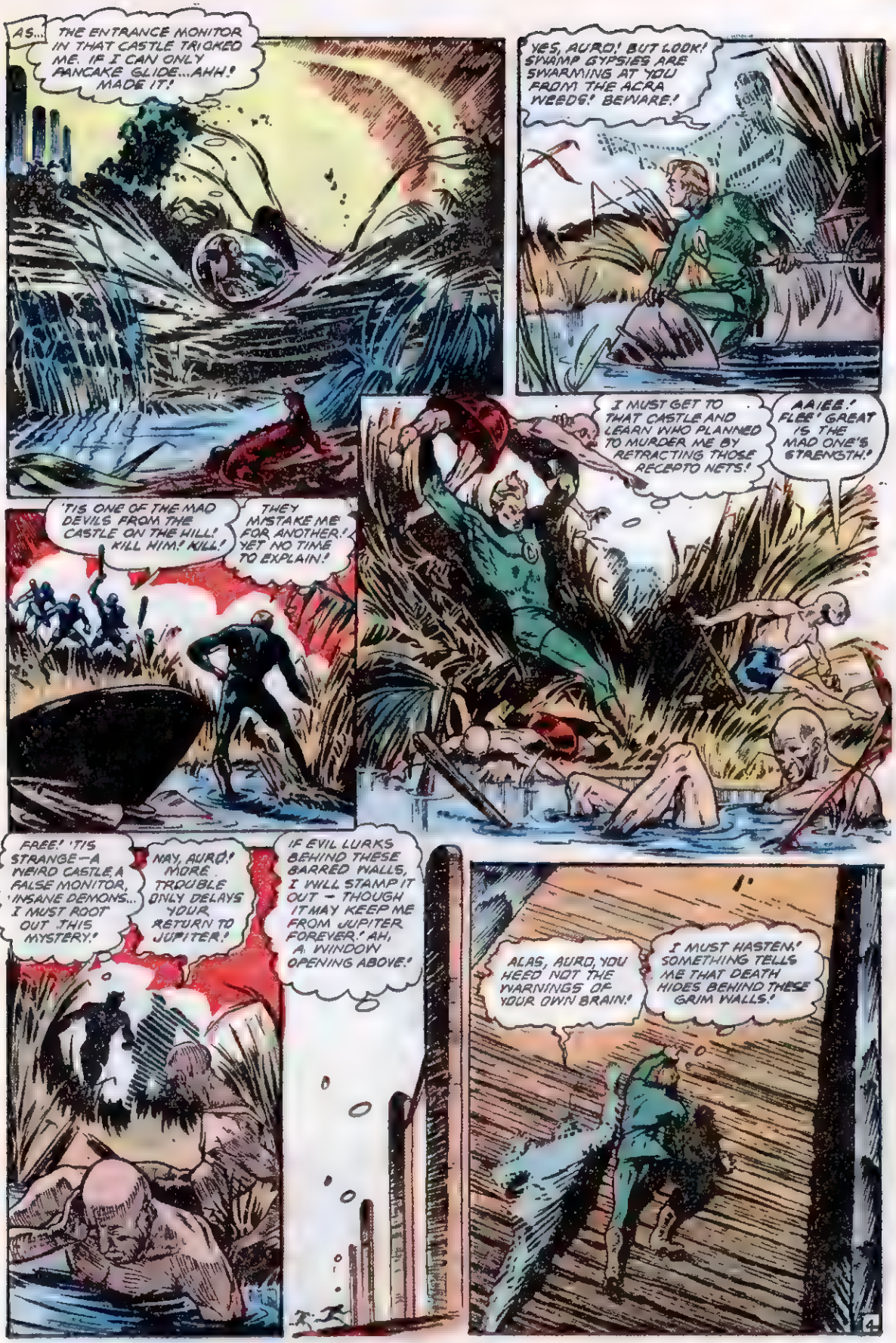
The streaked, line-cracked features came nearer. Loud, hag-cracklings burst from their lips. Drooping, bulging, dust-yellow flesh dangled from their coarse bodies. Flabby, quivering cheeks joggled in rage at the outworlders.

With a final croak of hate they pounced upon the Martians, ripped them to shreds and stamped into the soil of earth the ugliness they had brought to upheave their world of beauty.

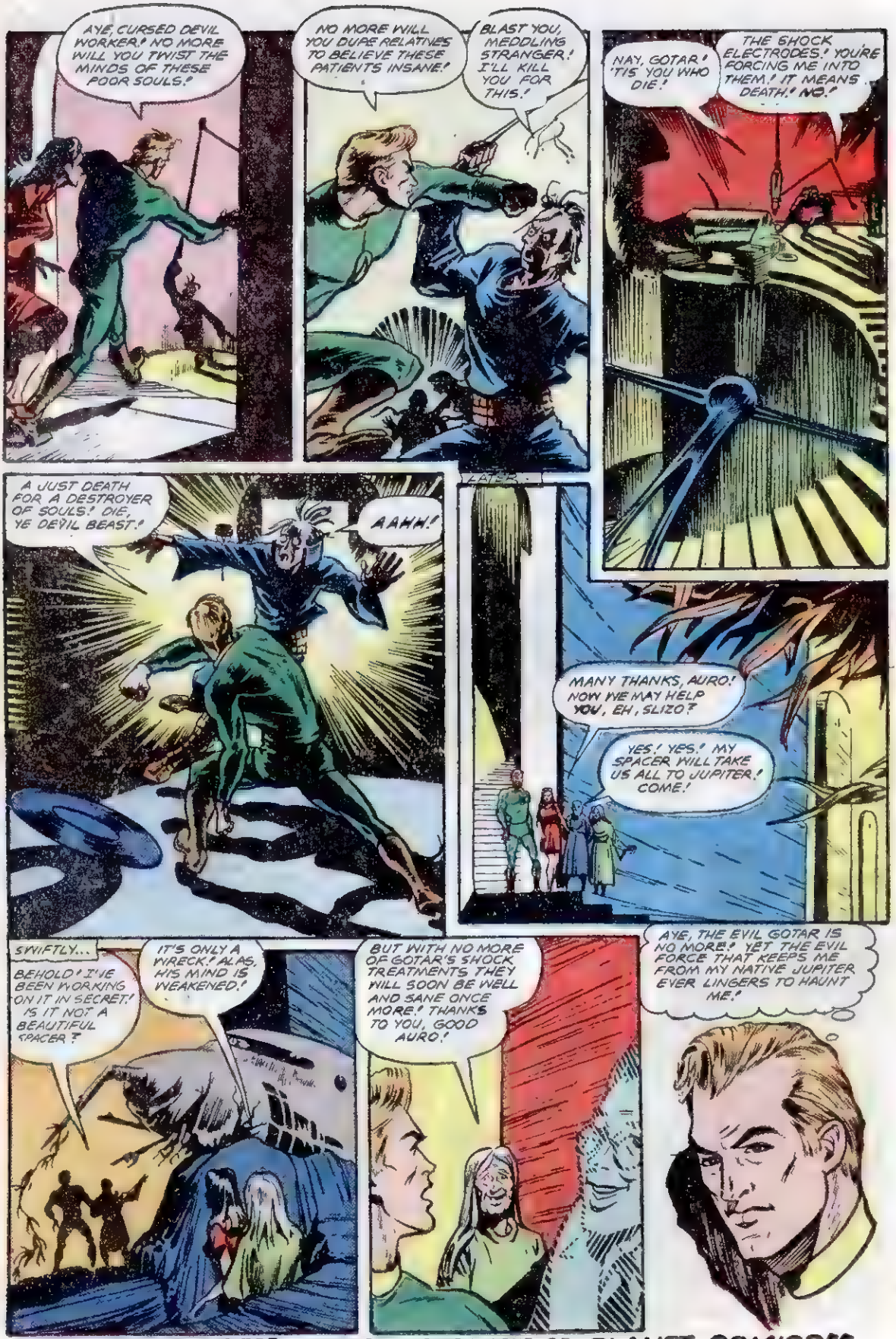
AURO
LORD OF JUPITER
BY DICK CHARLES
IM. DECADES AGO, GARGANTUAN JUPITER HOVERED AS A REMOTE SPECK ON THE EARTH HORIZON - UNEXPLORED - UNTOUCHED - UNATTAINABLE. AND SO IT SEEMS NOW TO AURO, BANISHED LORD OF THE MAMMOTH PLANET, WHO WANDERS THE SPACE PATHS WITH THE BRAIN OF CHET EDSON, LONG-DEAD EARTHLING, EVER SEEKING HIS LOST DOMAIN AS...
YOUR SPACER HEADS AWAY FROM JUPITER, CAPTAIN. IT IS KIND OF YOU TO LET ME OFF AT A JUNCTION PLANET.
THE EJECTO ROCKET WILL RELEASE YOU SINCE WE HAVE NOT TIME TO LAND, AURO.
I'M CONTACTING AN ENTRANCE MONITOR TO PREPARE RECEIVING NETS! THERE'S THE VIDEO SIGNAL NOW!
AH, AURO, IT SEEMS WE WILL NEVER REACH JUPITER! BUT THAT VOICE!
ENTRANCE MONITER CALLING FROM JUNCTION PLANET, NORVO - READY TO RECEIVE ONE PASSENGER FROM YOUR SPACER! AIM ROCKET WITH CARE - A MISS SPELLS DEATH!


I'M RAISING THE RECEPTO-NET PILLARS NOW, CAPTAIN. A FORCE DEVICE USUALLY KEEPS THEM LOWERED TO PREVENT UNWANTED VISITORS FROM ROCKET LANDING ON NORVO.
THERE! THE IMPULSE SPRINGS ARE TAUT. AIM PASSENGER'S ROCKET AT TRAJECTORY ANGLE YW-18! NORVO TO SPACER- SIGNING OFF!
THEY'RE READY ON NORVO! GOOD LUCK, AURO! ALL RIGHT, BLAST GUNNER- FIRE ROCKET!
I'M AWAY! PERHAPS ON THIS JUNCTION PLANET I WILL FIND MEANS AT LAST OF RETURNING TO JUPITER!
PERHAPS, AURO- YET YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THIS STRANGE PLANET. IT MAY BE A FOUL PLACE OF DANGER!
IT MAY BE A TRAP--- LURING YOU TO YOUR DEATH! BUT LOOK! WE'RE GOING TO THE RECEPTO-NETS!
As...
THE STRANGER IS ALMOST HERE! I HOPE HE CAN HELP ME! BUT SOMEONE'S COMING...
IT'S GOTAR! YOU'VE CAUGHT ME! DON'T WHIP ME! NO! NO!

OUT OF YOUR CELL AGAIN, EH, MARVA? PLAYING YOU ARE ENTRANCE MONITOR, IS IT? BACK WITH THE OTHER MAD ONES!
NO, GOTAR! IT IS NOT PLAY! A STRANGER ROCKETS TO THE RECEPTO NETS!
BAH! YOU WASTE ELECTRO POWER WITH YOUR INSANE FROLIC! THERE! I RETREAT THE NET TUBES!
THE STRANGER WILL CRASH! YOU'LL KILL HIM!
CEASE YOUR RANTING, MARVA! MISTRESS SUBA! COME! REMOVE THIS PATIENT!
AYE, MASTER! SHE FLED HER CELL WHILE I NODDED! YET BE NOT TOO HARSH WITH HER!
BAH! AS KEEPER OF THIS ASYLUM I MUST CONTROL THESE BABBLING IDIOTS! TAKE HER AWAY!
A-A-A! GOTAR CAUGHT MARVA TRYING TO HELP US ESCAPE!
THOSE POOR PEOPLE, MISTRESS SUBA! THEY ARE NOT TRULY INSANE!
NAY, CHILD! IT IS GOTAR WHO DRIVES THEM MAD TO COLLECT FEES FROM THEIR RELATIVES AS MASTER OF THE ASYLUM! ALAS!
I KNOW YOU WOULD HELP US IF YOU COULD, GOOD MISTRESS! BUT LOOK!
IT'S THAT STRANGER I LURED HERE TO AID US! GOTAR'S CLOSED THE RECEPTO NETS! HE'S GOING TO CRASH!
3


AS... THE ENTRANCE MONITOR IN THAT CASTLE TRICKED ME. IF I CAN ONLY PANCAKE GLIDE...AHH! MADE IT!
YES, AURO! BUT LOOK! SWAMP GYPSIES ARE SWARMING AT YOU FROM THE ACRA WEEDS! BEWARE!
I MUST GET TO THAT CASTLE AND LEARN WHO PLANNED TO MURDER ME BY RETRACTING THOSE RECEPTO NETS!
AAIEE! FLEE! GREAT IS THE MAD ONE'S STRENGTH!
'TIS ONE OF THE MAD DEVILS FROM THE CASTLE ON THE HILL! KILL HIM! KILL!
THEY MISTAKE ME FOR ANOTHER! YET NO TIME TO EXPLAIN!
FREE! 'TIS STRANGE—A WEIRD CASTLE, A FALSE MONITOR, INSANE DEMONS... I MUST ROOT OUT THIS MYSTERY!
NAY, AURO! MORE TROUBLE ONLY DELAYS YOUR RETURN TO JUPITER!
IF EVIL LURKS BEHIND THESE BARRED WALLS, I WILL STAMP IT OUT — THOUGH IT MAY KEEP ME FROM JUPITER FOREVER! AH, A WINDOW OPENING ABOVE!
ALAS, AURO, YOU HEED NOT THE WARNINGS OF YOUR OWN BRAIN!
I MUST HASTEN! SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT DEATH HIDES BEHIND THESE GRIM WALLS!
4

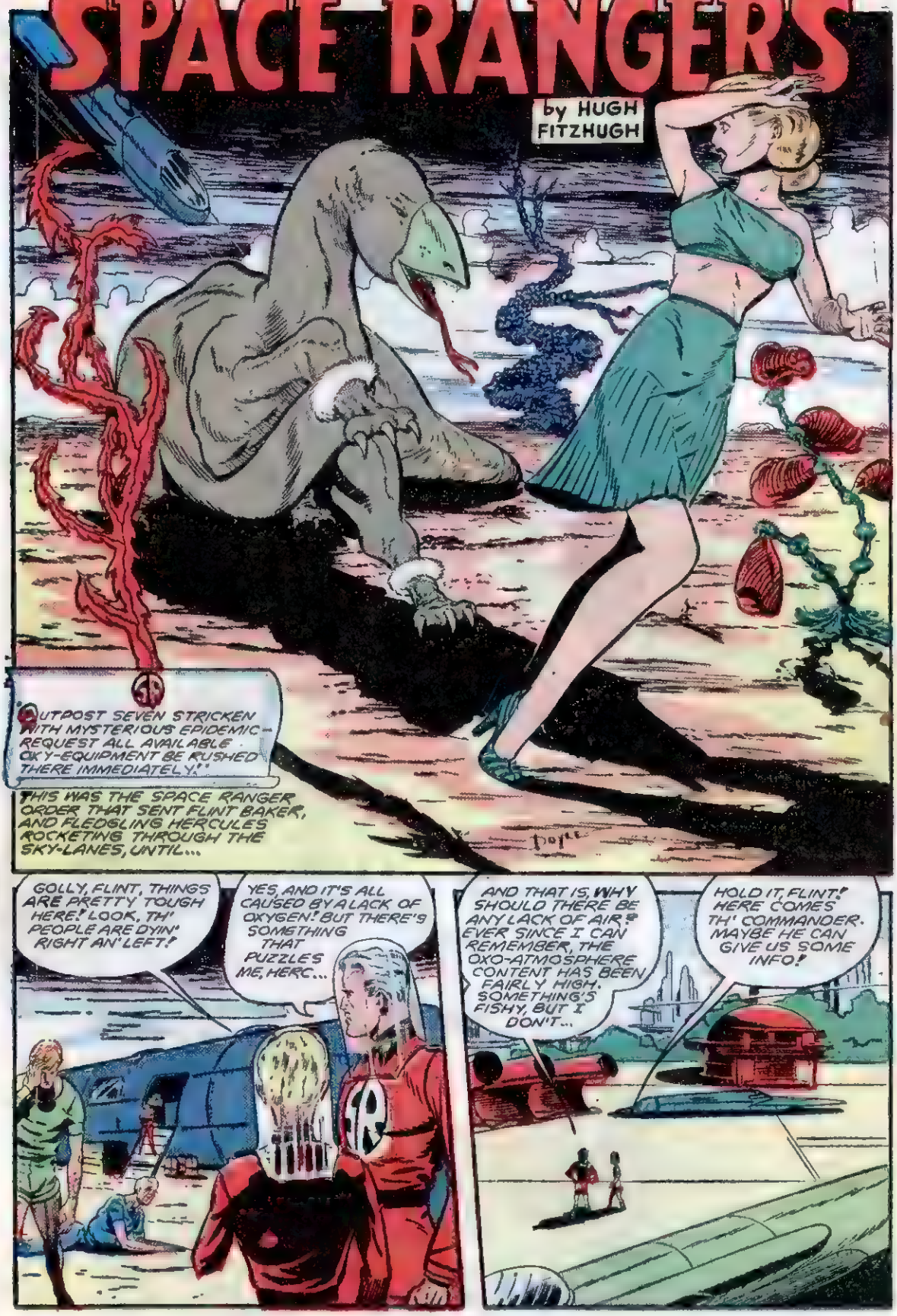
MADE IT! WHA...! THAT GIRL WEEPING! SHE'S THE ENTRANCE MONITOR! NOW WILL AURO BE AVENGED FOR HER TRICKERY!
AYE! 'TIS AURO! THE ONE YOU SOUGHT TO KILL, FALSE MAID!
WHO..? IT'S THE ROCKET PASSENGER!
NO! IT WAS GOTAR, THE CRUEL MASTER OF THIS PRISON! I SOUGHT YOUR AID! YOU MUST HELP ME!
HMM .. THE SWAMP MEN TOLD OF INSANE ONES DWELLING HERE!
GOTAR'S TREATMENTS ARE SLOWLY DRIVING US MAD SO THAT HE'LL BECOME RICH WITH THE FEES HE RECEIVES FOR OUR CARE. BUT LOOK!
OH, IT'S ONLY GOOD MISTRESS SUBA! SHE'S ON OUR SIDE! FREE US, SUBA! THE STRANGER CAN HELP US!
YET HASTEN, MARVA! EVEN NOW GOTAR TREATS A PATIENT!
AS..
HAH, SLIZO! I HAVE LEARNED OF YOUR PLANS TO BUILD A SPACER AND ESCAPE. IT IS TIME YOU RECEIVED ANOTHER MENTO-SHOCK OPERATION!
NO! IT DESTROYS MY MIND!
EXACTLY — SO THAT I MAY ENJOY FAT PAYMENTS FROM YOUR RELATIVES ON MARS! I WILL READY THE ELECTRO VOLTAGE ANODES!
THE SHOCK BLAST IS PREPARED! COME, OLD SLIZO! WHA...! WHO COMES?
15

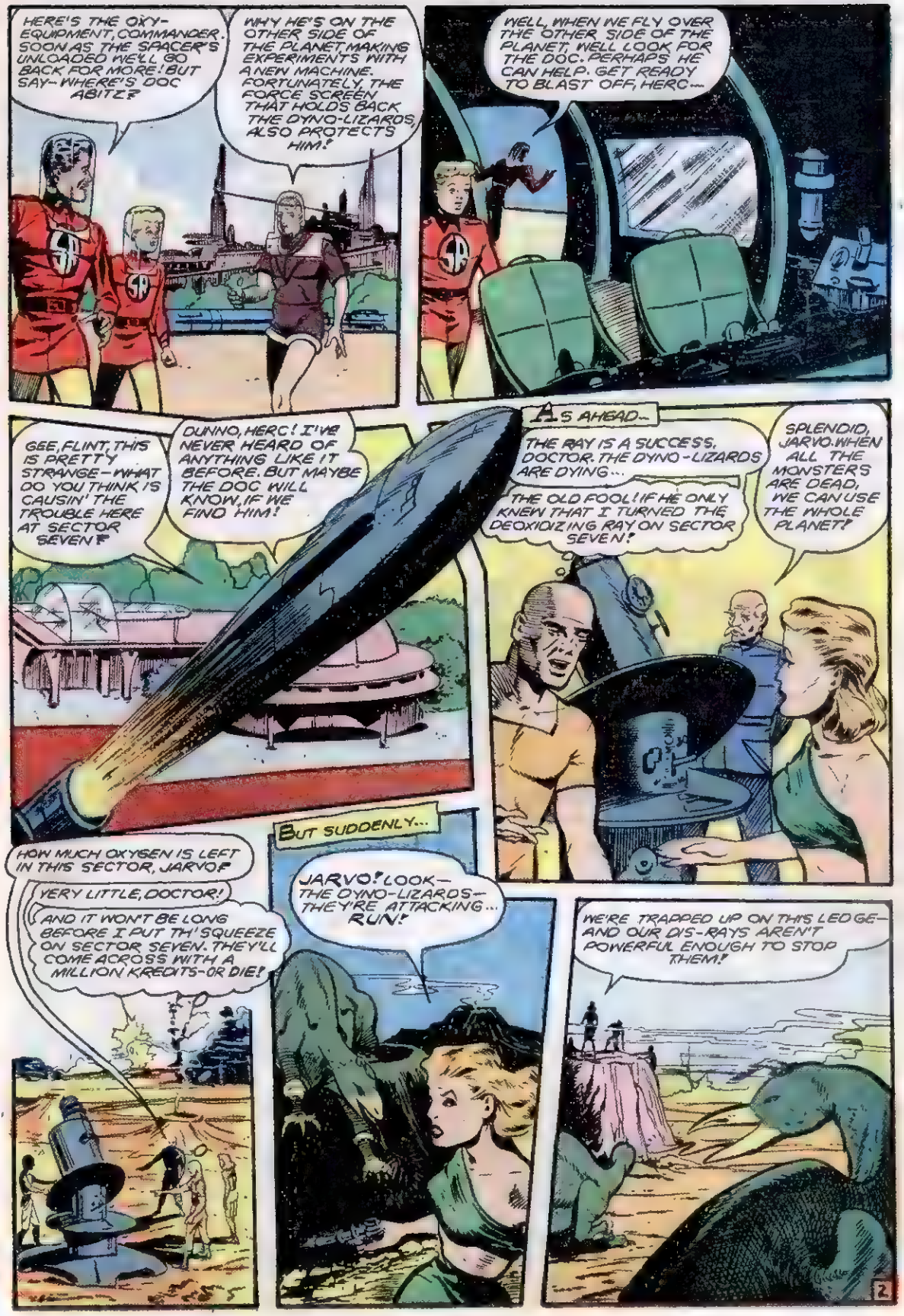

AYE, CURSED DEVIL WORKER! NO MORE WILL YOU TWIST THE MINDS OF THESE POOR SOULS!
NO MORE WILL YOU DUPE RELATIVES TO BELIEVE THESE PATIENTS INSANE!
BLAST YOU, MEDDLING STRANGER! I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!
NAY, GOTAR! 'TIS YOU WHO DIE!
THE SHOCK ELECTRODES! YOU'RE FORCING ME INTO THEM! IT MEANS DEATH! NO!
A JUST DEATH FOR A DESTROYER OF SOULS! DIE, YE DEVIL BEAST!
AAHH!
LATER
MANY THANKS, AURO! NOW WE MAY HELP YOU, EH, SLIZO?
YES! YES! MY SPACER WILL TAKE US ALL TO JUPITER! COME!
SWIFTLY...
BEHOLD! I'VE BEEN WORKING ON IT IN SECRET! IS IT NOT A BEAUTIFUL SPACER?
IT'S ONLY A WRECK! ALAS, HIS MIND IS WEAKENED!
BUT WITH NO MORE OF GOTAR'S SHOCK TREATMENTS THEY WILL SOON BE WELL AND SANE ONCE MORE! THANKS TO YOU, GOOD AURO!
AYE, THE EVIL GOTAR IS NO MORE! YET THE EVIL FORCE THAT KEEPS ME FROM MY NATIVE JUPITER EVER LINGERS TO HAUNT ME!

AURO, LORD OF JUPITER, APPEARS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!!

SPACE RANGERS

by HUGH FITZHUGH


"OUTPOST SEVEN STRICKEN WITH MYSTERIOUS EPIDEMIC—REQUEST ALL AVAILABLE OXY-EQUIPMENT BE RUSHED THERE IMMEDIATELY."
THIS WAS THE SPACE RANGER ORDER THAT SENT FLINT BAKER, AND FLEDGLING HERCULES ROCKETING THROUGH THE SKY-LANES, UNTIL...
Doyle
GOLLY, FLINT, THINGS ARE PRETTY TOUGH HERE! LOOK, TH' PEOPLE ARE DYIN' RIGHT AN' LEFT!
YES, AND IT'S ALL CAUSED BY A LACK OF OXYGEN! BUT THERE'S SOMETHING THAT PUZZLES ME, HERC...
AND THAT IS, WHY SHOULD THERE BE ANY LACK OF AIR? EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER, THE OXO-ATMOSPHERE CONTENT HAS BEEN FAIRLY HIGH. SOMETHING'S FISHY, BUT I DON'T...
HOLD IT, FLINT! HERE COMES TH' COMMANDER. MAYBE HE CAN GIVE US SOME INFO!

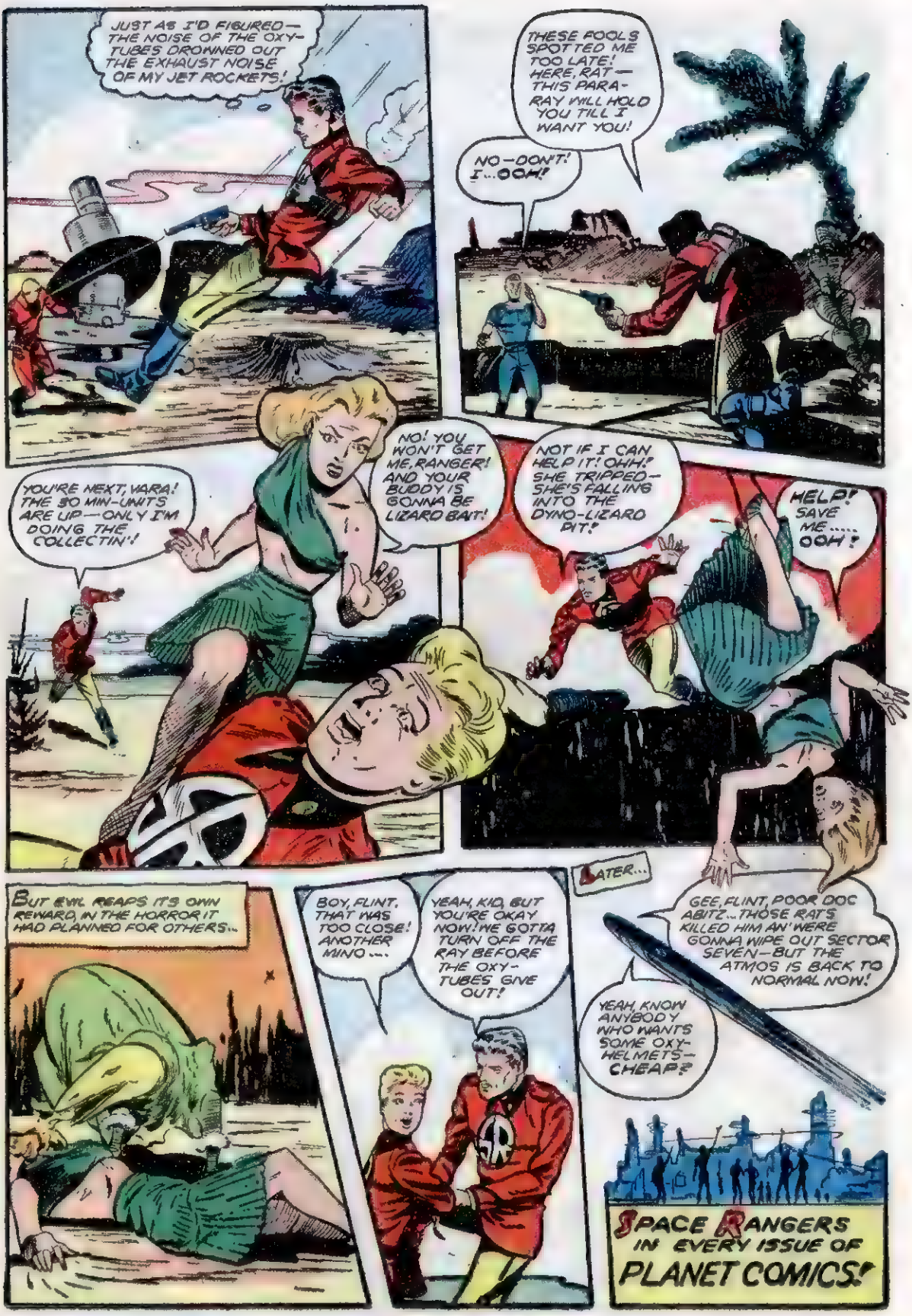

HERE'S THE OXY-EQUIPMENT, COMMANDER. SOON AS THE SPACER'S UNLOADED WE'LL GO BACK FOR MORE! BUT SAY- WHERE'S DOC ABITZ?
WHY HE'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET, MAKING EXPERIMENTS WITH A NEW MACHINE. FORTUNATELY, THE FORCE SCREEN THAT HOLDS BACK THE DYNO-LIZARDS, ALSO PROTECTS HIM!
WELL, WHEN WE FLY OVER THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET, WE'LL LOOK FOR THE DOC. PERHAPS HE CAN HELP. GET READY TO BLAST OFF, HERC...
GEE, FLINT, THIS IS PRETTY STRANGE- WHAT DO YOU THINK'S CAUSIN' THE TROUBLE HERE AT SECTOR SEVEN?
DUNNO, HERC! I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE. BUT MAYBE THE DOC WILL KNOW, IF WE FIND HIM!
AS AHEAD-
THE RAY IS A SUCCESS, DOCTOR. THE DYNO-LIZARDS ARE DYING...
THE OLD FOOL! IF HE ONLY KNEW THAT I TURNED THE DEOXIDIZING RAY ON SECTOR SEVEN!
SPLENDID, JARVO. WHEN ALL THE MONSTERS ARE DEAD, WE CAN USE THE WHOLE PLANET!
HOW MUCH OXYGEN IS LEFT IN THIS SECTOR, JARVO?
VERY LITTLE, DOCTOR!
AND IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE I PUT TH' SQUEEZE ON SECTOR SEVEN. THEY'LL COME ACROSS WITH A MILLION KREDITS- OR DIE!
BUT SUDDENLY...
JARVO! LOOK- THE DYNO-LIZARDS- THEY'RE ATTACKING... RUN!
WE'RE TRAPPED UP ON THIS LEDGE- AND OUR DIS-RAYS AREN'T POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STOP THEM!
2

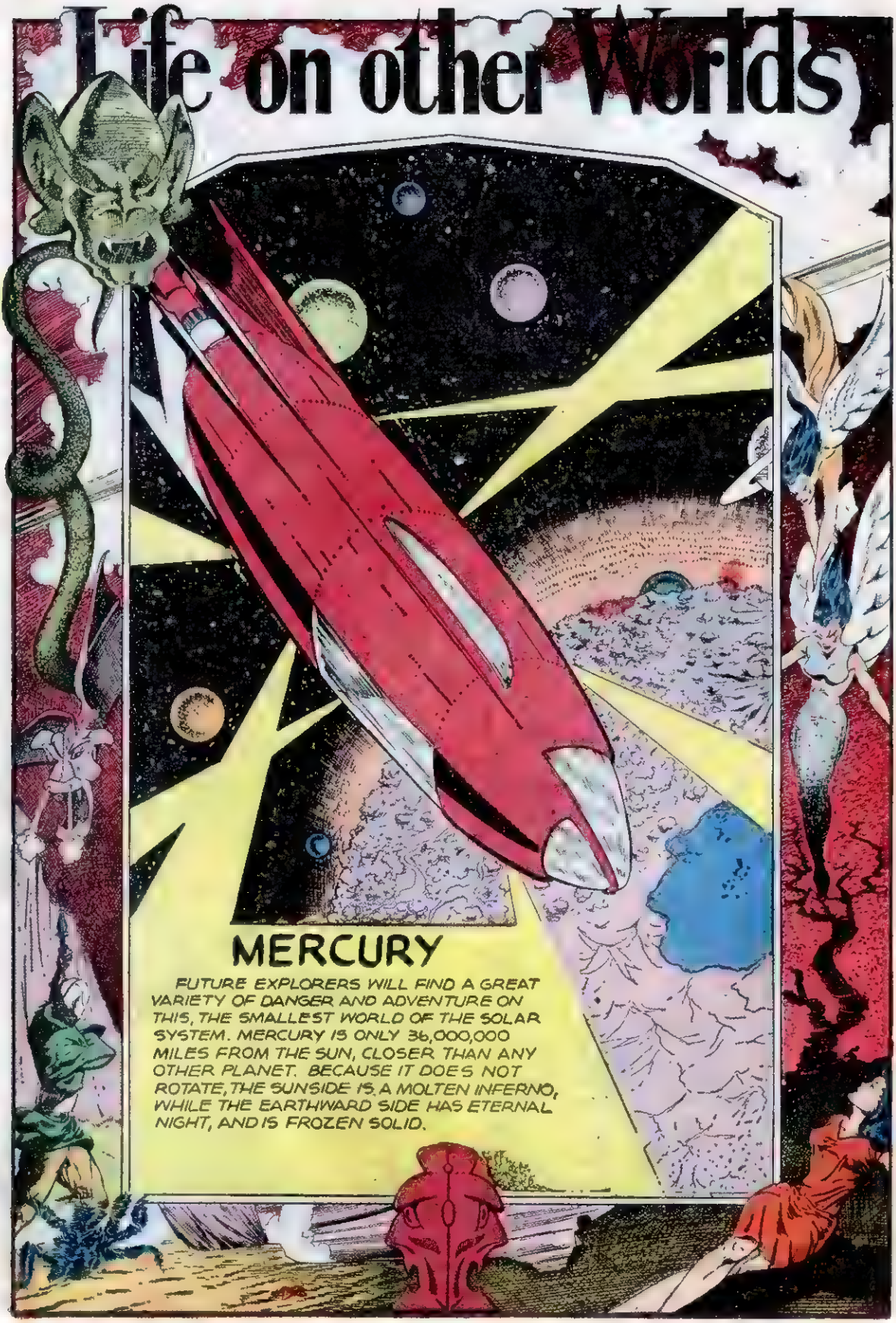
AS ABOVE...

I'M GONNA PAN WITH THE TELEVIEWER FLINT, AND—LOOK! TAKE A QUICK LOOK-SEE—THE DYNO-LIZARDS HAVE SOME PEOPLE TRAPPED!
QUICK! SET THE JET TUBES AT FULL SPEED, AND WARM UP THE RAY CANNONS!
THERE—THAT'LL FIX HIM—THAT'S ONE BEAST WHO WON'T KILL ANY MORE!
FLINT! BLAST THAT OTHER ONE—HE GONNA GRAB THOSE PEOPLE!
NAILED HIM, HERC! LOOK'S LIKE IT'S ALL CLEAR NOW—LET'S HEAD DOWN...
IT'S SAFE NOW—THEY'VE KILLED THE DYNO-LIZARDS! BUT JARVO—DOESN'T THAT LOOK LIKE A RANGER SPACER?
YEAH—AN' THEY'RE LANDIN'!
GOTTA MAKE SURE THEY DON'T GET TOO NOSEY!
EVERYTHING OKAY? WE SAW YOU BEING ATTACKED AND—WHY, IT'S, DOC ABITZ! WE'RE GLAD TO SEE YOU!
YOU SAVED US JUST IN TIME, FLINT! THOSE BEASTS ALMOST RUINED MY NEW MACHINE. I'M EXPERIMENTING WITH THE ATMOSPHERE—DEOXIDIZING...
THAT OLD PEST WILL SPOIL THE WHOLE SHOW—GOTTA DO SOMETHING QUICK!
OH—HELP ME... I FEEL FAINT! I—I...
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, RANGER. SHE GETS THESE SPELLS FROM EXCITEMENT. I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER—YOU AN' YOUR BUDDY CAN TAKE OFF...

SO LONG, BOYS! THANKS FOR THE ASSIST — WE'RE OKAY NOW!
...AND YOU KEEP YER TRAP SHUT, DOC—OR I'LL BLAST YOU! NOBODY'S SPOILIN' MY PLANS!
LET'S GET OUT O' HERE FLINT! WE—HEY! LISTEN... THE DOC'S CALLIN'!
FLINT! COME BACK— THESE DEVILS—OOH! I-I'M SHOT!
FLINT-FLINT... TH-THEY FOOLED ME! INSTEAD OF KILLING DYNO-LIZARDS ON THIS SIDE OF THE PLANET THEY TRAINED MY RAY MACHINE ON SECTOR SEVEN... THEY'RE TAKING THE OXYGEN OUT OF THE AIR— IT'LL KILL EVERYONE..... OOHH!
SO THAT'S IT— WHY THOSE DIRTY SPACE RATS— I-I'LL... FLINT! LOOK OUT— THEY'VE SPOTTED US!
WHY YOU—
SLOW DOWN, WISE GUY— I'M GIVING THE ORDERS NOW. TIE THE KID UP, JARVO, I'VE GOT AN IDEA HOW WE CAN GET OUR MILLION KREDITS— AND FLINT BAKER'S GOING TO HELP US...
...UNLESS HE'D LIKE ME TO FINISH OFF THE LITTLE SQUIRT WITH A BLAST OF THE RAY GUN. HAW— NAW, HE'LL TAKE ME TO SECTOR SEVEN — AND SEE TO IT THAT THE COMMANDER COMES ACROSS WITH THE KREDITS!

AND SOON...
THAT'S THE STORY COMMANDER. ONE MILLION KREDITS TO MAKE THEM TURN OFF THE DEOXY-RAY—AND RELEASE HERC. SHE KNOWS YOU MUST AGREE!
YES—AND WE WANT IT IN 30 MINS!
TILL THEN, I'LL JUST BORROW THIS SPACE SLED AND WAIT FOR YOU TO BRING THE KREDITS. SO LONG, SUCKERS...
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE HELPLESS, FLINT! WE CAN'T NULLIFY THE RAY—SO WE'LL HAVE TO PAY THEM OFF!
NO WE WON'T, COMMANDER—THERE'S ONE CHANCE I'VE GOT TO TAKE! TURN UP ALL THE OXY-EQUIPMENT TO FULL POWER!
AND LATER, ON THE OTHER SIDE...
YOU CERTAINLY BURNED UP THE ROCKO-JETS GETTIN' BACK HERE WITH THE GOOD NEWS, VARA! BUT THAT NOISE—IT'S DEAFENING! THOSE FOOLS ARE USING ALL THEIR OXYGEN UP!
SO WHAT! LOOK, HERE COMES THE GRAVY TRAIN FROM THE COMMANDER!
HURRY, PUT THE KREDITS DOWN HERE...AND TELL ME, WHY ARE YOUR OXY-MACHINES TURNED UP SO HIGH?
I-I DON'T KNOW! I WAS ONLY TOLD TO BRING THE KREDITS.
YES—AND NOW THAT WE'VE GOT THE KREDITS, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TURN OFF THE RAY! BUT WHAT A PERFECT SET-UP—WE JUST LEAVE THE RAY ON A WHILE, AND THEY'LL ALL BE DEAD!
ALL RIGHT, GET BACK TO YOUR SECTOR SEVEN!
AND AS FOR SONNY BOY HERE, THE DYNO-LIZARDS WILL FINISH HIM OFF! WE DON'T WANT ANY WITNESS TO OUR EXIT!
ONE LITTLE PUSH AN' WE'RE ON OUR—WHAT!?!
5

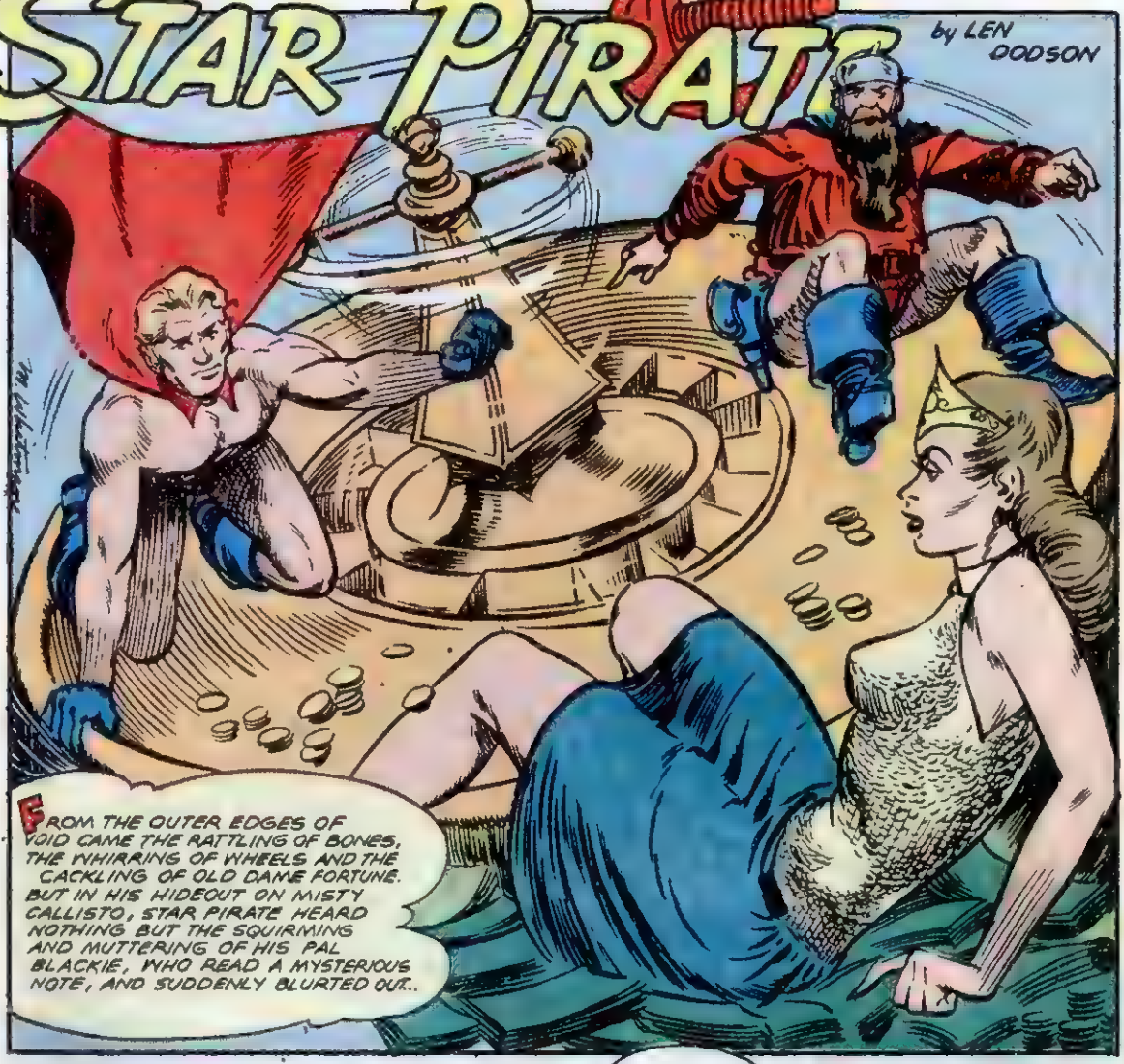

JUST AS I'D FIGURED— THE NOISE OF THE OXY-TUBES DROWNED OUT THE EXHAUST NOISE OF MY JET ROCKETS!
THESE FOOLS SPOTTED ME TOO LATE! HERE, RAT— THIS PARA-RAY WILL HOLD YOU TILL I WANT YOU!
NO—DON'T! I...OOH!
YOU'RE NEXT, VARA! THE 50 MIN-UNITS ARE UP—ONLY I'M DOING THE COLLECTIN'!
NO! YOU WON'T GET ME, RANGER! AND YOUR BUDDY IS GONNA BE LIZARO BAIT!
NOT IF I CAN HELP IT! OHH! SHE TRIPPED— SHE'S FALLING INTO THE DYNO-LIZARO PIT!
HELP! SAVE ME..... OOH!
LATER...
GEE, FLINT, POOR DOC ABITZ...THOSE RATS KILLED HIM AN' WERE GONNA WIPE OUT SECTOR SEVEN—BUT THE ATMOS IS BACK TO NORMAL NOW!
YEAH, KNOW ANYBODY WHO WANTS SOME OXY-HELMETS— CHEAP?
BUT EVIL REAPS IT'S OWN REWARD, IN THE HORROR IT HAD PLANNED FOR OTHERS...
BOY, FLINT, THAT WAS TOO CLOSE! ANOTHER MINO....
YEAH, KID, BUT YOU'RE OKAY NOW! WE GOTTA TURN OFF THE RAY BEFORE THE OXY-TUBES GIVE OUT!
SPACE RANGERS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!


Life on other Worlds
MERCURY
FUTURE EXPLORERS WILL FIND A GREAT VARIETY OF DANGER AND ADVENTURE ON THIS, THE SMALLEST WORLD OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM. MERCURY IS ONLY 36,000,000 MILES FROM THE SUN, CLOSER THAN ANY OTHER PLANET. BECAUSE IT DOES NOT ROTATE, THE SUNSIDE IS A MOLTEN INFERNO, WHILE THE EARTHWARD SIDE HAS ETERNAL NIGHT, AND IS FROZEN SOLID.

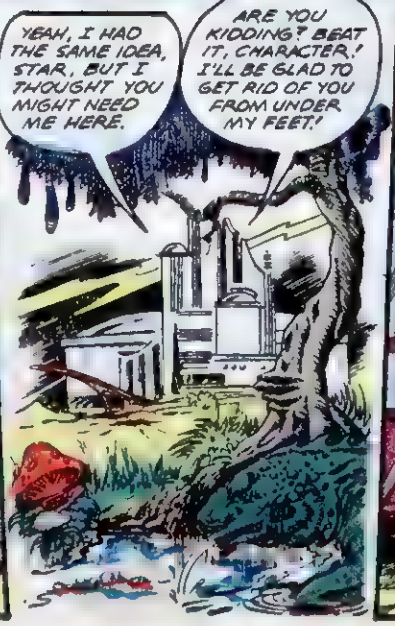
THE ADVENTURER WHO CAN WITHSTAND THE RADIO ACTIVITY AND HEAT OF THE SUNSIDE WILL FIND A WORTHY OPPONENT FOR THE HUNT, IN THE MIGHTY EEOPEE, WHOSE MONSTROUS BEAK CAN RIP STEEL PLATES APART.
THE GOGOPLEX, WHOSE BODY STANDS HIGHER THAN A 25 STORY BUILDING, IS THE ONLY ANIMAL WHO CAN STAND THE SUB ZERO WEATHER OF THE UNDERSIDE. HIS SIXTEEN INCHES OF SKIN PROTECT HIM FROM THE DEADLY RAYS OF THE PROTO-RAY GUNS OUR EXPLORERS ARE USING TO GET BACK TO THEIR SHIP.

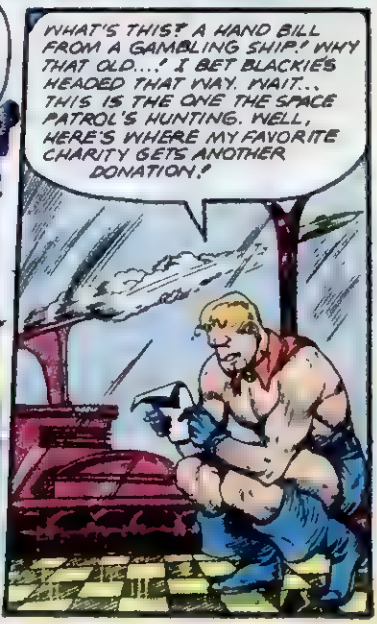
STAR PIRATE

by LEN ODDSON


FROM THE OUTER EDGES OF VOID CAME THE RATTLING OF BONES, THE WHIRRING OF WHEELS AND THE CACKLING OF OLD DAME FORTUNE. BUT IN HIS HIDEOUT ON MISTY CALLISTO, STAR PIRATE HEARD NOTHING BUT THE SQUIRMING AND MUTTERING OF HIS PAL BLACKIE, WHO READ A MYSTERIOUS NOTE, AND SUDDENLY BLURTED OUT..

JUMPING JUPITER, STAR, IT'S...IT'S AUNT ZORA AGAIN. HAD ANOTHER ATTACK OF... ER...FEVER!
THAT'S TOO BAD, BLACKIE. WHY DON'T YOU PAY HER A VISIT? THE SIGHT OF YOUR PRETTY PAN MAY BE BETTER THAN MEDICINE!
GAMBLING TONIGHT EVERYONE WELCOME NO LIMIT

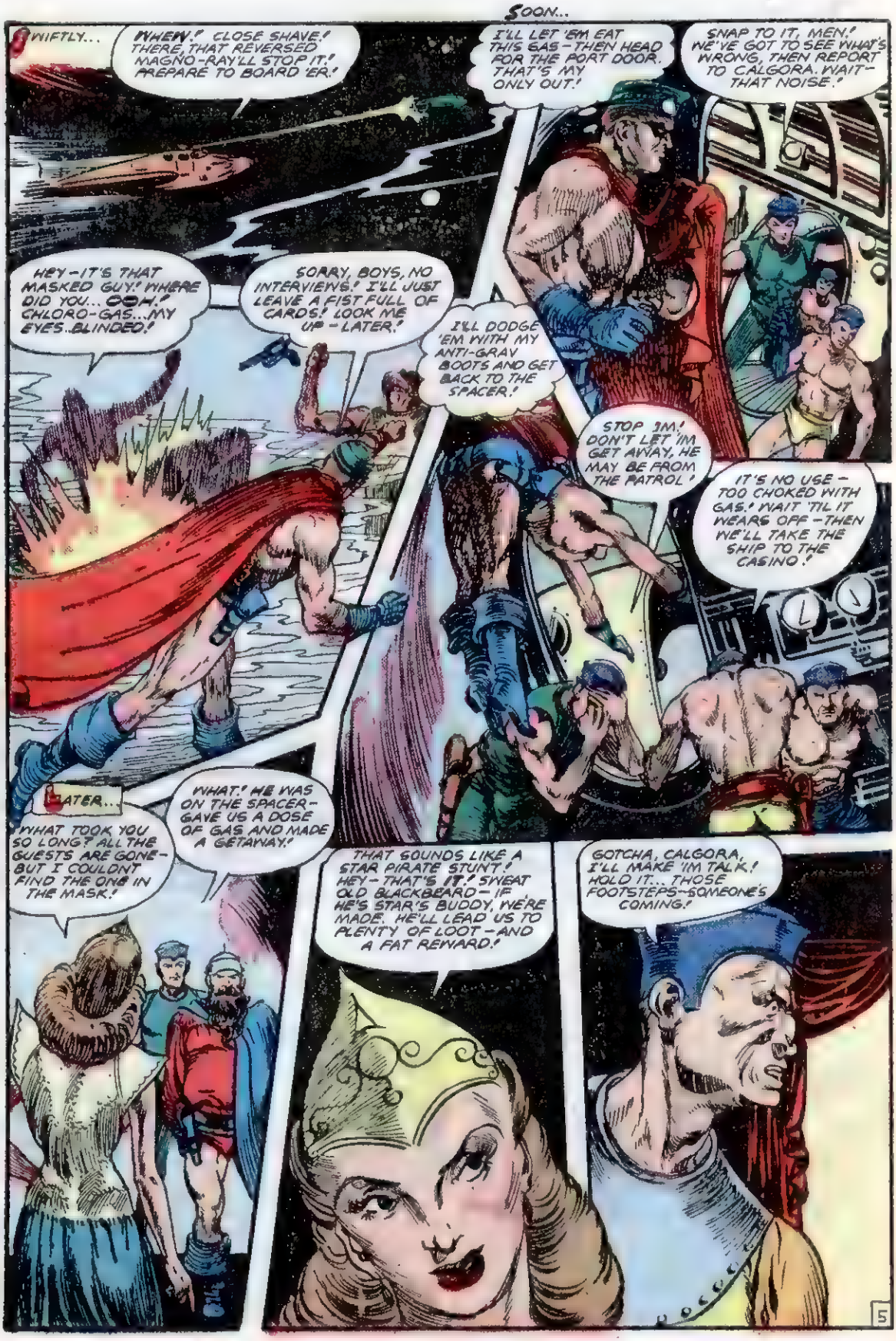

YEAH, I HAD THE SAME IDEA, STAR, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED ME HERE.
ARE YOU KIDDING? BEAT IT, CHARACTER! I'LL BE GLAD TO GET RID OF YOU FROM UNDER MY FEET!


WHAT'S THIS? A HAND BILL FROM A GAMBLING SHIP! WHY THAT OLD...! I BET BLACKIE'S HEADED THAT WAY. WAIT... THIS IS THE ONE THE SPACE PATROL'S HUNTING. WELL, HERE'S WHERE MY FAVORITE CHARITY GETS ANOTHER DONATION!

AND LATER, OUTSIDE THE PLANETARY 10-MILE GAMBLING LIMIT...
HOT DOG, THERE SHE IS - GAMBLER'S PARADISE AND OLE BLACKIE'S ENTERING THOSE PEARLY GATES NOW.
HERE'S ANOTHER SUCKER!
WELCOME TO CALGORA'S CASINO, HANDSOME, WHERE THE ELITE MEET TO CHEAT!
HA! THAT'S A GOOD ONE, HONEY! REMIND ME TO LOOK YOU UP AFTER I'VE CLEANED OUT THIS JOINT!
SOON...
33 - BLACK! I'VE WON AGAIN! WOW - I'M AS HOT AS A BLASTER TO-NIGHT!
PLACE YOUR BETS, LADIES AND GENTS. THE WHEEL IS ABOUT TO SPIN!
HOLD ON, SONNY! THIS IS PENNY-ANTE STUFF! WHERE'S THE MAN-SIZED GAMES?
RIGHT THIS WAY SIR! I'M SURE CALGORA WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU - PERSONALLY!
AND IN A SMALL PRIVATE ROOM, THE WHEEL IS FASTER AND THE SKY'S THE LIMIT...
C'MON, 33 - BLACK, WE CAN'T LOSE!
HEY, WAIT - BALL'S ACTING QUEER - AND THAT BABE'S FINGER...
21 - RED! I LOST! YOU CHEAT! TH' WHEEL'S FIXED! GIMME BACK MY CREDITS OR...
WHY, YOU TIN-HORN GAMBLER! YOU CAN'T EVEN LOSE LIKE A MAN. GET 'IM, BOYS!
HEY, LEGGO, I'LL TEAR THIS SUCKER TRAP APART! OOF!
NICE GOING, MEN. THIS GUY'S STUPID ENOUGH TO BLAB TO THE SPACE PATROL! TAKE CARE OF HIM!
2

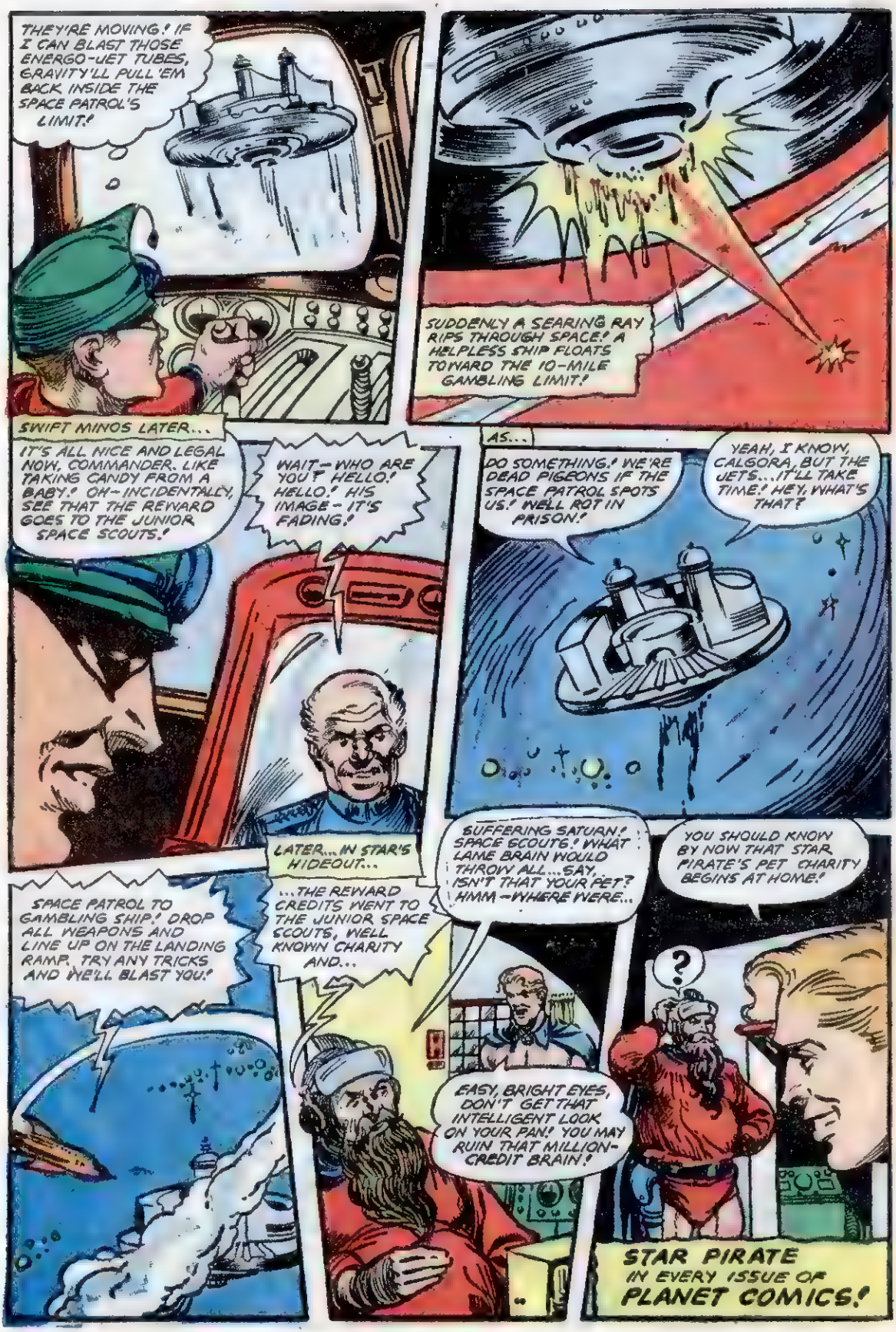
WHILE...
HERE'S THE LANDING RAMP OF THE GAMBLING SHIP! I'M GLAD MY SPACER'S INVISIBLE. IT'LL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO CASE THE SET-UP!
I SUPPOSE THE BOYS HAVE SHUT UP THAT BEARDED BABOON BY NOW.
OKAY, STAR, SET 'ER DOWN GENTLY AND LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!
I CAN'T RISK TANGLING WITH THE POLICE! I BETTER— WHAT THE...! SAY, HOW'D YOU GET HERE? I DIDN'T SEE ANY SPACERS LAND.
GOOD EVENING, DREAM-GIRL! LET'S SAY I RODE DOWN TO YOU ON MOON BEAMS!
STAND BACK! THIS PARA-RAY'LL TAKE THE FIGHT OUT OF 'IM!
AS INSIDE...
HERE, MUSCLE HEAD, LET'S SEE HOW STRONG YOU ARE NOW, TAKE IT!
HEY, NOT THAT— IT AIN'T FAIR— I'LL...OOOH!
YEAH - BUT CAREFUL NOW, WE'VE GOT TO MAKE THIS ACT LOOK GOOD!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? WHAT DID HE EXPECT US TO DO— WASH AND COMB HIS BEARD? C'MON, LET'S GET 'IM OUT!
HURRY, THIS, ER, GENT WON TOO MUCH AND HE PASSED OUT. PUT HIM IN HIS SHIP.
WHY, THAT'S BLACKIE! THOSE BIRDS ARE UP TO SOMETHING FISHY!
3

THERE – THE ROBOT CONTROL'S SET. ARE YOU READY WITH THAT CHRONO-BOMB?
RIGHT, IT'LL EXPLODE FIVE MINOS AFTER THE SHIP LEAVES THE RAMP.! C'MON, WE'LL BEAT IT NOW!
SO LONG, CHUMP! YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT YOU! HOW'D IT GO, CALGORA?
PERFECT, BOYS! NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT.
IN A LITTLE WHILE, THERE'LL BE A PIECE OF THAT GUY ON EVERY PLANET IN SPACE!
YEAH, THREE MORE MINOS AND HE'LL BE STAR-DUST!
AND SO PARALYZED BLACKIE RIDES THE PILOT'S SEAT OF A DEATH SHIP, AS THE MINOS TICK OMINOUSLY ON...
BUT SUDDENLY...
AH! NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON! THERE, THAT DISPOSES OF THE BOMB! NOW TO PULL A SWITCH!
POOR BLACKBEARD, STILL GOOFY FROM A PARA-BLAST! THERE, I'VE TURNED THIS TUB AROUND!
WHILE...
CALGORA – LOOK! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG – THE SPACER DIDN'T BLOW UP!
NO! AND IT'S HEADING BACK FOR US! IT'LL BLAST US WHEN IT HITS. TAKE A JET-SLED AND SEE WHAT'S WRONG, WHILE I GET RID OF THE GUESTS!


SOON...
SWIFTLY...
PHEW!' CLOSE SHAVE! THERE, THAT REVERSED MAGNO-RAY'LL STOP IT! PREPARE TO BOARD 'ER!
I'LL LET 'EM EAT THIS GAS - THEN HEAD FOR THE PORT DOOR. THAT'S MY ONLY OUT!
SNAP TO IT, MEN! WE'VE GOT TO SEE WHAT'S WRONG, THEN REPORT TO CALGORA. WAIT - THAT NOISE!
HEY - IT'S THAT MASKED GUY! WHERE DID YOU... OOH! CHLORO-GAS... MY EYES..BLINDED!
SORRY, BOYS, NO INTERVIEWS! I'LL JUST LEAVE A FIST FULL OF CARDS! LOOK ME UP - LATER!
I'LL DODGE 'EM WITH MY ANTI-GRAV BOOTS AND GET BACK TO THE SPACER!
STOP 'IM! DON'T LET 'IM GET AWAY, HE MAY BE FROM THE PATROL!
IT'S NO USE - TOO CHOKED WITH GAS! WAIT 'TIL IT WEARS OFF - THEN WE'LL TAKE THE SHIP TO THE CASINO!
LATER...
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG? ALL THE GUESTS ARE GONE - BUT I COULDN'T FIND THE ONE IN THE MASK!
WHAT! HE WAS ON THE SPACER - GAVE US A DOSE OF GAS AND MADE A GETAWAY!
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A STAR PIRATE STUNT! HEY - THAT'S IT! SWEAT OLD BLACKBEARD - IF HE'S STAR'S BUDDY, WE'RE MADE. HE'LL LEAD US TO PLENTY OF LOOT - AND A FAT REWARD!
GOTCHA, CALGORA, I'LL MAKE 'IM TALK! HOLD IT... THOSE FOOTSTEPS - SOMEONE'S COMING!
5

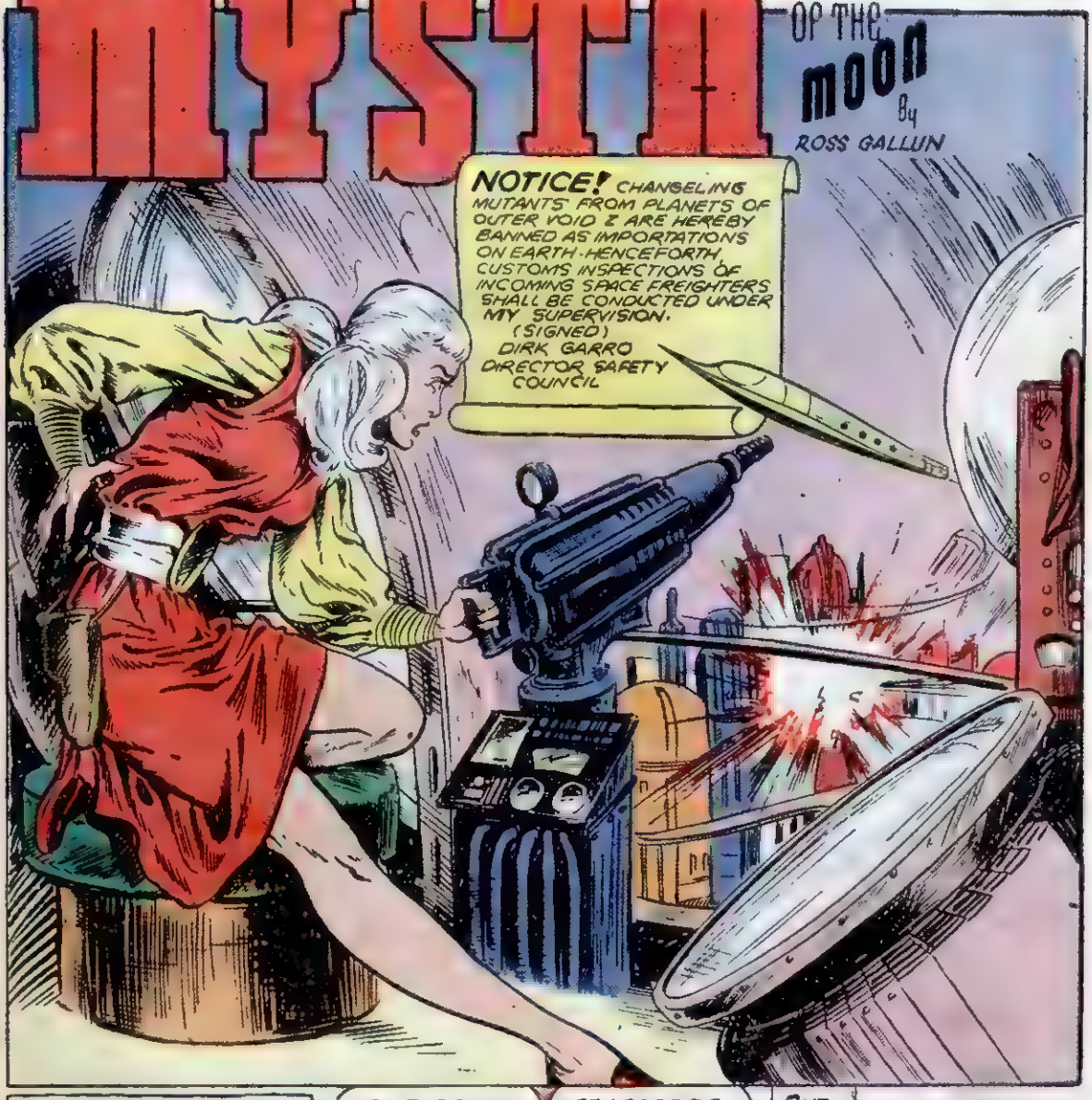
SUDDENLY...

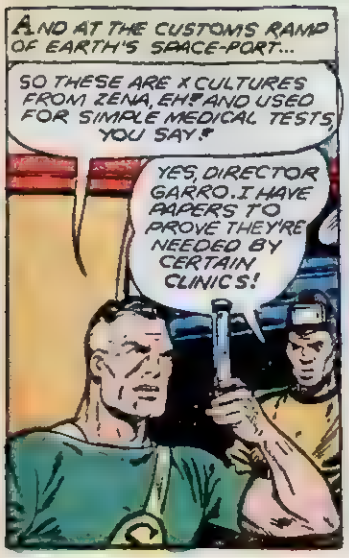
BLACKIE - CAN YOU HEAR ME? MAKE A BREAK FOR YOUR SPACER! I'LL HOLD 'EM OFF!
MY HEAD'S STILL RINGING...THAT VOICE... GOT TO GET OUT... ONE SIDE, JUNIOR!
STILL DIZZY... CAN'T THINK! YEAH - THE SHIP - I'LL HEAD FOR CALLISTO!
C'MON, BOYS, TRY YOUR LUCK! HERE'S A REAL GAME OF CHANCE!
I HEAR THE JETS! BLACKIE'S GONE. TOO BAD, I HAVE TO LEAVE, CHUMS, BUT THE GAME'S OVER!
GET ON YOUR FEET, AND CHASE 'IM, FOOLS! HE CAN'T GET AWAY. ALL THE SHIPS ARE GONE!
WHAT THE...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HE-HE'S VANISHING INTO SPACE!
FAREWELL, DREAM-GIRL, SEE YOU IN JAIL - REAL SOON!
I'LL BE...DISAPPEARED! IF THAT WAS STAR PIRATE WE'D BETTER FIND A NEW LOCATION - AND QUICK!
C'MON, STOP GAWKING! FIRE THE ENERGO-JETS! WE'VE GOT TO OUT-SMART THAT BOY!
LOOK AT 'EM RUN! THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY TO SCRAM, BUT STAR STILL HAS AN ACE UP HIS SLEEVE!


THEY'RE MOVING! IF I CAN BLAST THOSE ENERGO-JET TUBES, GRAVITY'LL PULL 'EM BACK INSIDE THE SPACE PATROL'S LIMIT!
SUDDENLY A SEARING RAY RIPS THROUGH SPACE! A HELPLESS SHIP FLOATS TOWARD THE 10-MILE GAMBLING LIMIT!
SWIFT MINOS LATER...
IT'S ALL NICE AND LEGAL NOW, COMMANDER. LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! OH-INCIDENTALLY, SEE THAT THE REWARD GOES TO THE JUNIOR SPACE SCOUTS!
WAIT-WHO ARE YOU? HELLO! HELLO! HIS IMAGE-IT'S FADING!
AS...
DO SOMETHING! WE'RE DEAD PIGEONS IF THE SPACE PATROL SPOTS US! WE'LL ROT IN PRISON!
YEAH, I KNOW, CALGORA, BUT THE JETS...IT'LL TAKE TIME! HEY, WHAT'S THAT?
LATER...IN STAR'S HIDEOUT...
...THE REWARD CREDITS WENT TO THE JUNIOR SPACE SCOUTS, WELL KNOWN CHARITY AND...
SUFFERING SATURN! SPACE SCOUTS! WHAT LAME BRAIN WOULD THROW ALL...SAY, ISN'T THAT YOUR PET? HMM-WHERE WERE...
YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW THAT STAR PIRATE'S PET CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME!
SPACE PATROL TO GAMBLING SHIP! DROP ALL WEAPONS AND LINE UP ON THE LANDING RAMP. TRY ANY TRICKS AND WE'LL BLAST YOU!
?
EASY, BRIGHT EYES, DON'T GET THAT INTELLIGENT LOOK ON YOUR PAN! YOU MAY RUIN THAT MILLION-CREDIT BRAIN!
STAR PIRATE IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

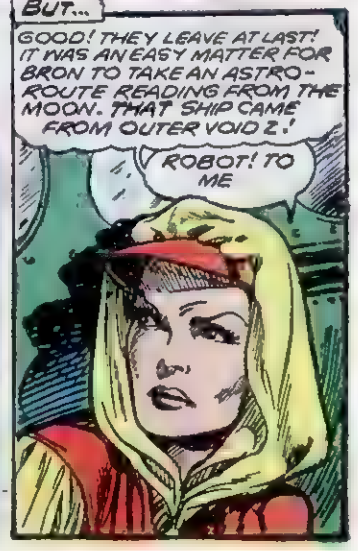
MYSTA of the moon

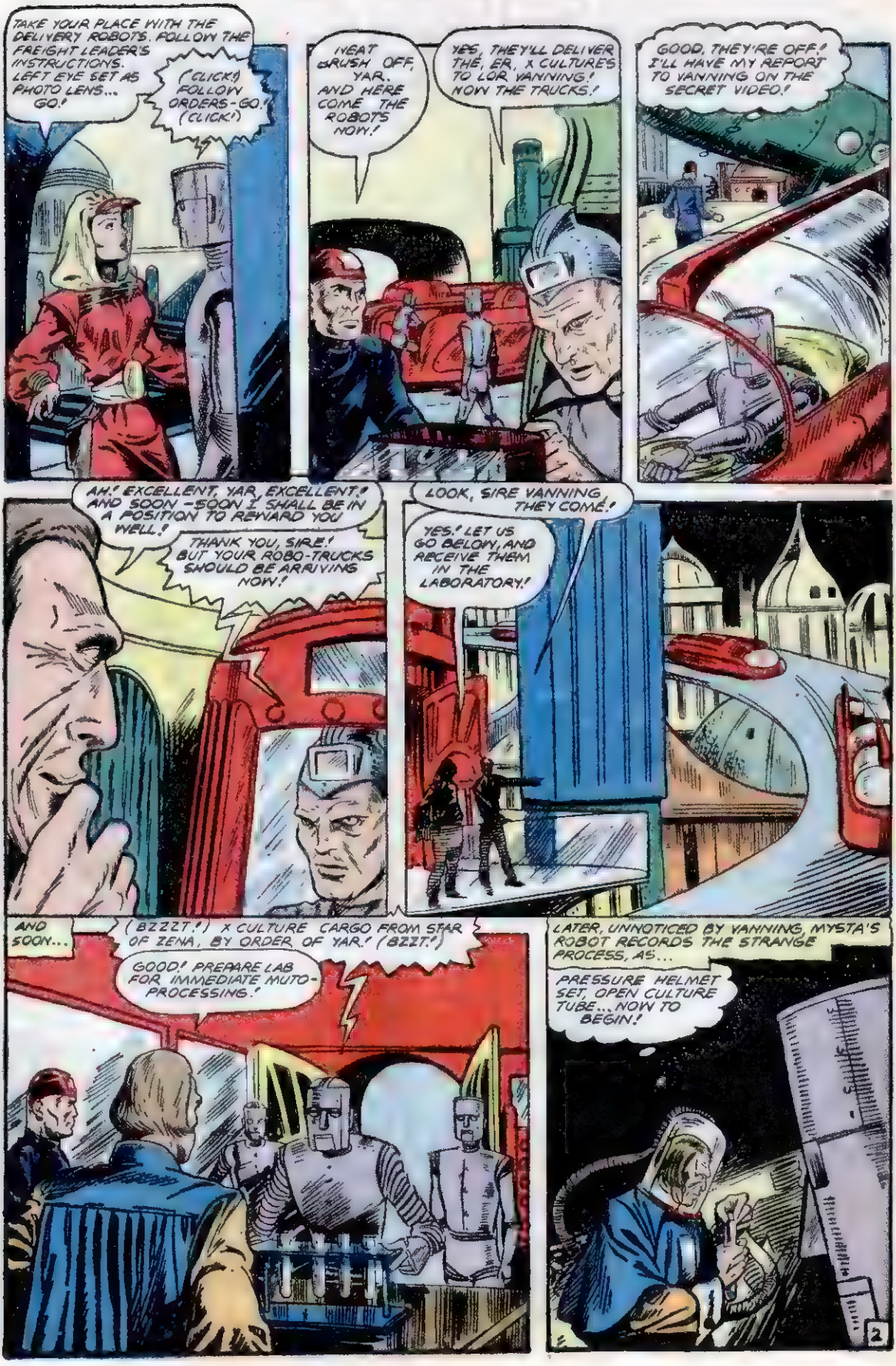
By ROSS GALLUN

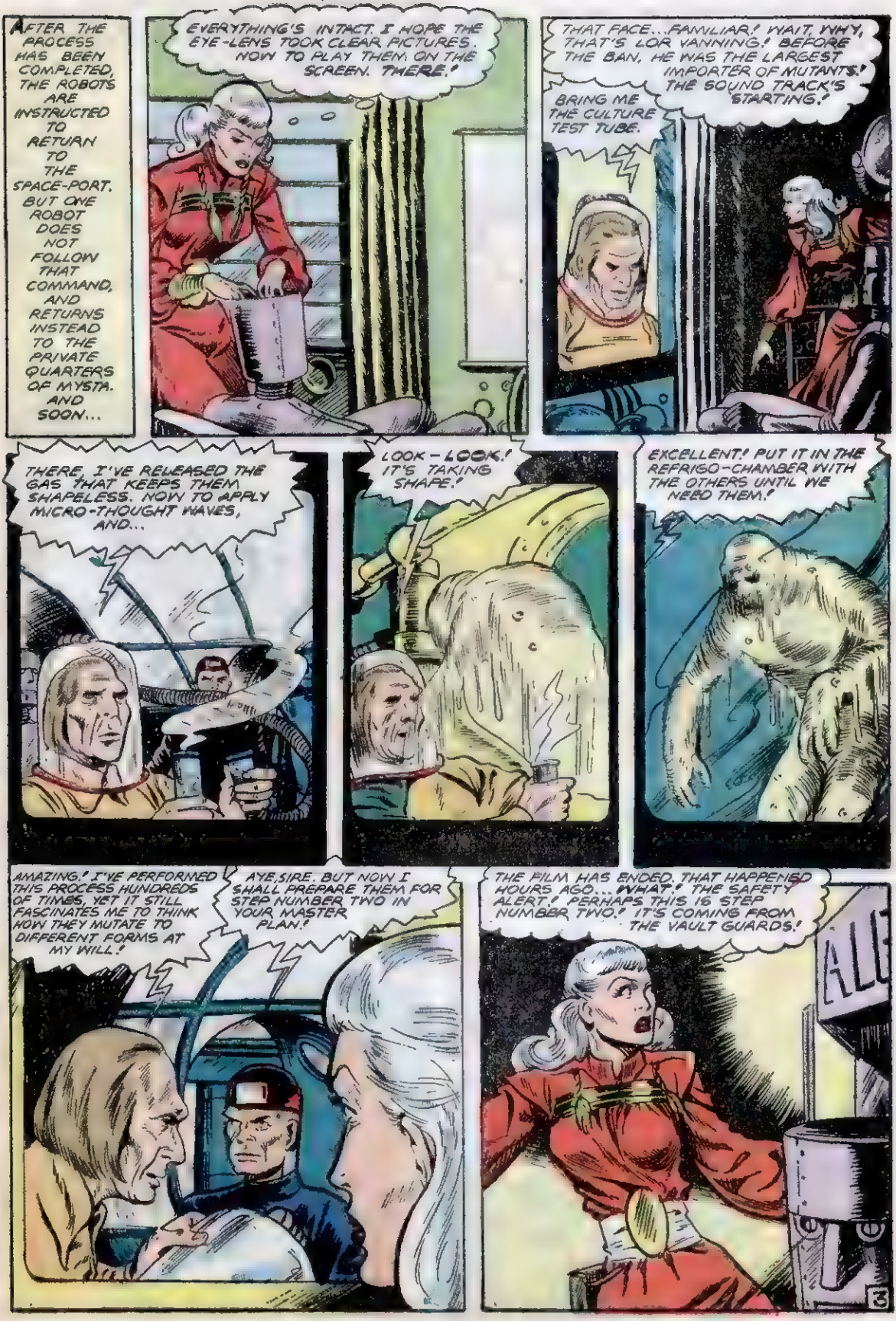

NOTICE! CHANGELING MUTANTS FROM PLANETS OF OUTER VOID 2 ARE HEREBY BANNED AS IMPORTATIONS ON EARTH. HENCEFORTH, CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS OF INCOMING SPACE FREIGHTERS SHALL BE CONDUCTED UNDER MY SUPERVISION. (SIGNED) DIRK GARRO DIRECTOR SAFETY COUNCIL


AND AT THE CUSTOMS RAMP OF EARTH'S SPACE-PORT...
SO THESE ARE X CULTURES FROM ZENA, EH? AND USED FOR SIMPLE MEDICAL TESTS, YOU SAY?
YES, DIRECTOR GARRO. I HAVE PAPERS TO PROVE THEY'RE NEEDED BY CERTAIN CLINICS!

WELL, I'VE OKAYED HIM. HIS PAPERS AND CARGO SEEM TO BE IN ORDER.
VERY GOOD, SIR. YET, SOMEHOW, THOSE MUTANTS ARE STILL GETTING IN! LOOK, ANOTHER SHIP ON RAMP 4!


BUT...
GOOD! THEY LEAVE AT LAST! IT WAS AN EASY MATTER FOR BRON TO TAKE AN ASTRO-ROUTE READING FROM THE MOON. THAT SHIP CAME FROM OUTER VOID 2.!
ROBOT! TO ME

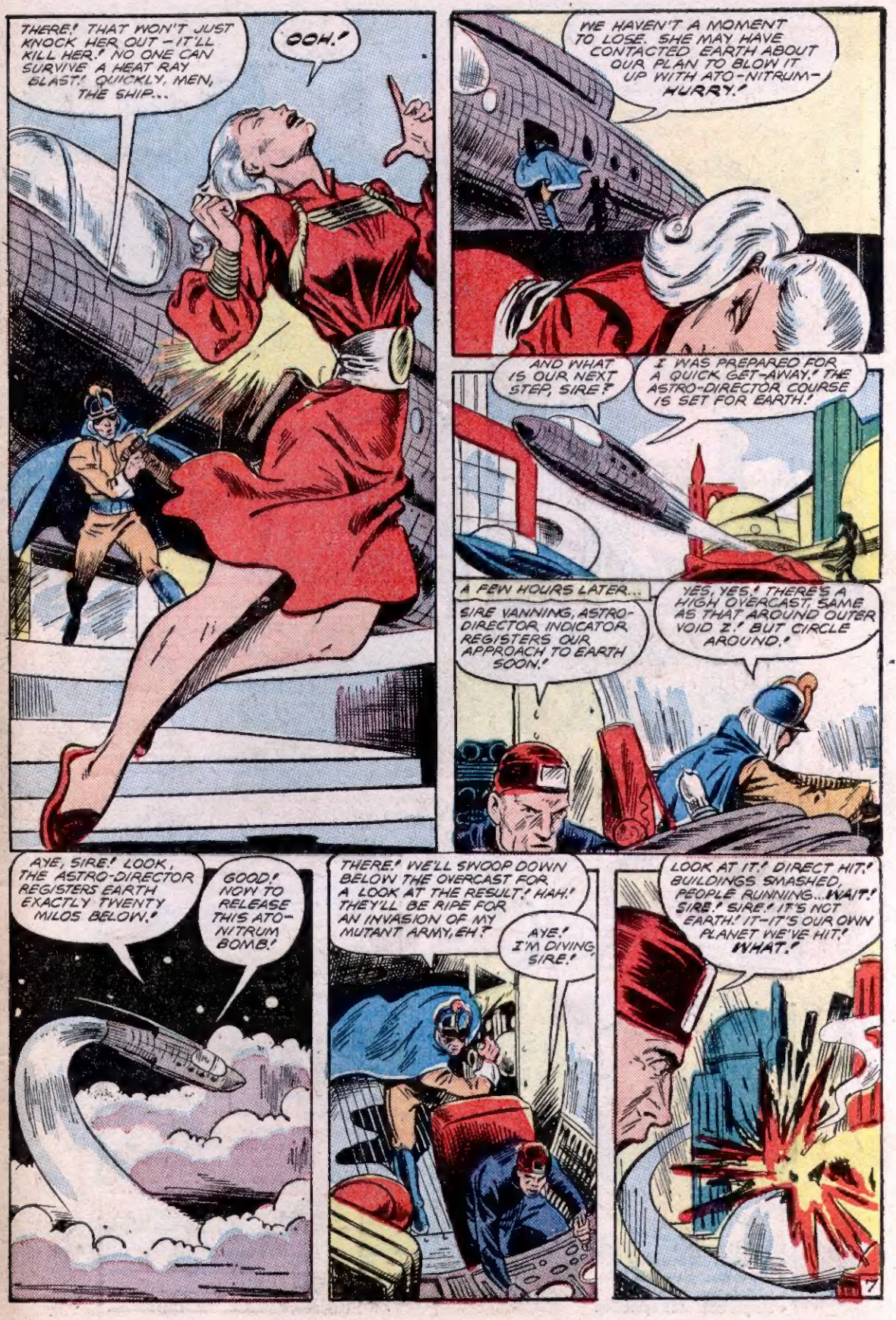

TAKE YOUR PLACE WITH THE DELIVERY ROBOTS. FOLLOW THE FREIGHT LEADER'S INSTRUCTIONS. LEFT EYE SET AS PHOTO LENS... GO!
(CLICK) FOLLOW ORDERS - GO! (CLICK)
NEAT CRUSH OFF, YAR. AND HERE COME THE ROBOTS NOW!
YES, THEY'LL DELIVER THE, ER, X CULTURES TO LOR VANNING! NOW THE TRUCKS!
GOOD, THEY'RE OFF! I'LL HAVE MY REPORT TO VANNING ON THE SECRET VIDEO!
AH! EXCELLENT, YAR, EXCELLENT! AND SOON - SOON I SHALL BE IN A POSITION TO REWARD YOU WELL!
THANK YOU, SIRE! BUT YOUR ROBO-TRUCKS SHOULD BE ARRIVING NOW!
LOOK, SIRE VANNING THEY COME!
YES! LET US GO BELOW, AND RECEIVE THEM IN THE LABORATORY!
AND SOON...
(BZZZT!) X CULTURE CARGO FROM STAR OF ZENA, BY ORDER OF YAR! (BZZT!)
GOOD! PREPARE LAB FOR IMMEDIATE MUTO-PROCESSING!
LATER, UNNOTICED BY VANNING, MYSTA'S ROBOT RECORDS THE STRANGE PROCESS, AS...
PRESSURE HELMET SET, OPEN CULTURE TUBE... NOW TO BEGIN!
2

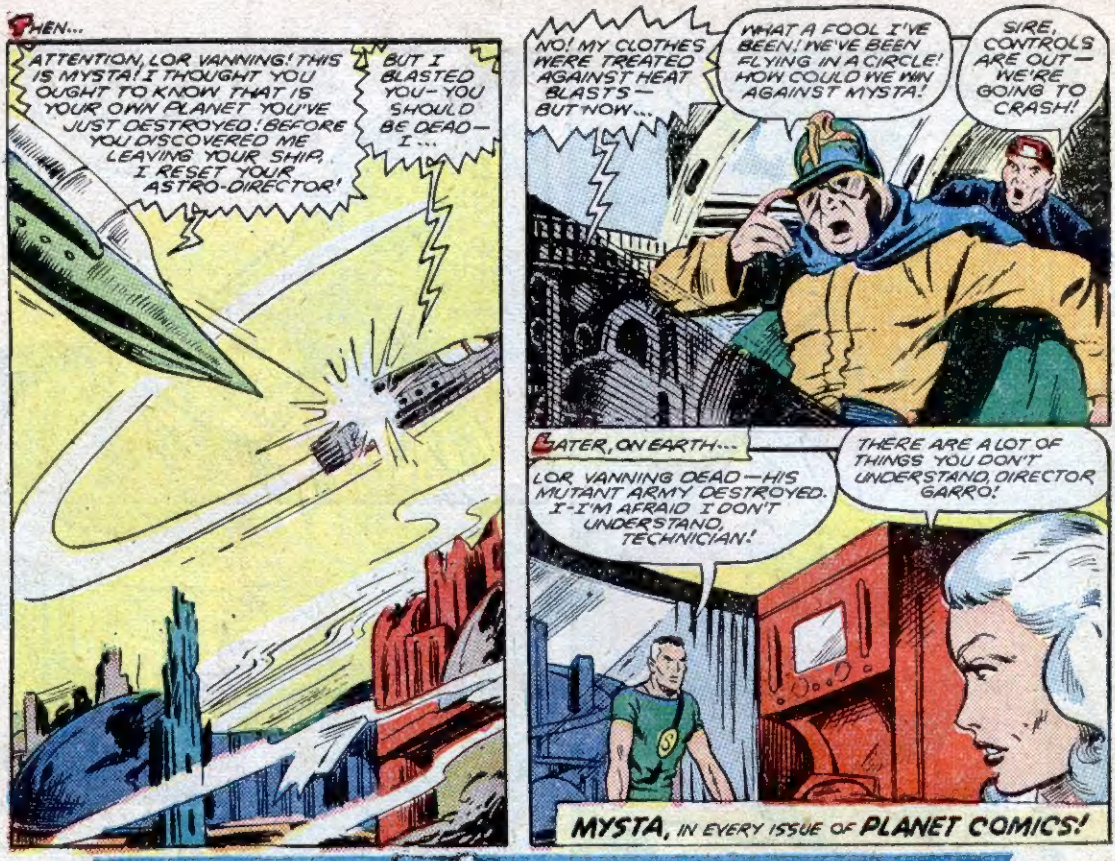

AFTER THE PROCESS HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THE ROBOTS ARE INSTRUCTED TO RETURN TO THE SPACE-PORT. BUT ONE ROBOT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT COMMAND, AND RETURNS INSTEAD TO THE PRIVATE QUARTERS OF MYSTA. AND SOON...
EVERYTHING'S INTACT. I HOPE THE EYE-LENS TOOK CLEAR PICTURES. NOW TO PLAY THEM ON THE SCREEN. THERE.!
THAT FACE...FAMILIAR! WAIT, WHY, THAT'S LOR VANNING! BEFORE THE BAN, HE WAS THE LARGEST IMPORTER OF MUTANTS! THE SOUND TRACK'S STARTING.!
BRING ME THE CULTURE TEST TUBE.
THERE, I'VE RELEASED THE GAS THAT KEEPS THEM SHAPELESS. NOW TO APPLY MICRO-THOUGHT WAVES, AND...
LOOK - LOOK.! IT'S TAKING SHAPE.!
EXCELLENT! PUT IT IN THE REFRIGO-CHAMBER WITH THE OTHERS UNTIL WE NEED THEM.!
AMAZING.! I'VE PERFORMED THIS PROCESS HUNDREDS OF TIMES, YET IT STILL FASCINATES ME TO THINK HOW THEY MUTATE TO DIFFERENT FORMS AT MY WILL.!
AYE, SIRE. BUT NOW I SHALL PREPARE THEM FOR STEP NUMBER TWO IN YOUR MASTER PLAN.!
THE FILM HAS ENDED. THAT HAPPENED HOURS AGO... WHAT.! THE SAFETY ALERT.! PERHAPS THIS IS STEP NUMBER TWO.! IT'S COMING FROM THE VAULT GUARDS.!
ALE
3

AS BELOW...
I'VE SOUNDED THE ALERT, BUT...
NOTHING'LL STOP 'EM! THEY'RE MUTANTS!
THEN, AMIDST THE SHOUTS AND SCREAMS OF DYING GUARDS, LOR YANNING ISSUES THESE ORDERS...
OPEN UP, QUICKLY!
NOW—NOW FOR THE COMPLETION OF PLAN NUMBER TWO— THAT ATO-EXPLOSIVE SPHERE!
AT LAST! ENOUGH ATO-NITRUM IN THIS GLOBE TO BLAST A WHOLE PLANET IN TWO! MUST GET OUTSIDE!
GOOD! THOSE MUTANTS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED LONG ENOUGH TO THE SAFETY GUARDS! NOW THEY'RE CHANGING INTO THEM!
THERE, I'VE DRESSED THEM, AND THEY LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THE GUARDS THEY'VE KILLED! THAT SHOULD DELAY ANYONE WHO TRIES TO FOLLOW US! COME!
RIGHT, SIRE—AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON. SOMEONE'S COMING NOW!
HURRY! MY SHIP IS NEARBY!

AND SOON, AS VANNING'S SPACE SHIP ZOOMS OFF IN THE DISTANCE...
HO, GUARDS! WHY DID YOU FLASH THE ALERT SIGNAL?
ARRRGH! A-A-A-A-A!
WELL, TALK—TALK! WHY DID—WAIT! Y-YOU'RE NOT A SAFETY GUARD! IT-IT'S A MUTANT!
THEN SLOWLY, WITHOUT A MASTER-WILL TO COMMAND IT, THE MUTANT REVERTS TO MONSTER STATUS...
ARRGH! A-A-A-A!
IT'S CHANGING!.. ONE CHANCE— MY HYPNO-DISK!
THERE! THAT HALTED IT! UGH! WHAT A SIGHT—HALF MAN, HALF MONSTER. BUT IT ALONE CAN LEAD ME TO VANNING'S HIDEOUT!
SOON...
STRANGE, IT'S LED ME TO THE SPACE-PORT, NOW IT'S MOTIONING FOR ME TO ENTER MY SHIP!
WE'VE TAKEN OFF AND, UNDER MY SUGGESTION, THE MUTANT HAS SET OUR COURSE FOR OUTER VOID 2, WHERE VANNING MUST HAVE A HIDEOUT PLANET!
HOURS LATER...
AH, IT'S POINTING TO THAT CITY BELOW. IT LOOKS AS IF SOMEONE IS ADDRESSING AN ARMY. I'LL LAND SWIFTLY— AND SILENTLY!
5

MEANWHILE...
WELL, WHAT HAPPENED? THE VAULT ALERT SOUNDED, BUT I DON'T SEE A THING WRONG.!
NEITHER DO I, DIRECTOR GARRO, YET— LOOK.! THOSE GUARDS.!
LUNGING TOWARD US— TH-THEY'RE MUTANTS.! BLAST THEM.!
TOO LATE.! PARA RAY.. OOH.!
AS, ON THE PLANET IN OUTER VOID Z...
HO.! I AM YOUR LEADER, LOR VANNING.! THE TIME TIME HAS COME FOR THE MUTANT HORDES TO STRIKE.!
IT WAS SIMPLE ENOUGH TO SMUGGLE A FEW MUTANTS PAST EARTH CUSTOMS AND USE THEM TO OBTAIN THE ATO-NITRUM EXPLOSIVE.! EARTHLINGS ARE STUPID— THEY DESERVE TO DIE.! WHAT— MY SHIP...
EVERYTHING'S PERFECT, SO FAR—OH.! VANNING HAS SPOTTED ME.!
MUST GET BACK TO MY OWN SPACER.!
A SPY.! I'M GOING TO STOP HER WITH A HEAT RAY.!
6


THERE! THAT WON'T JUST KNOCK HER OUT – IT'LL KILL HER! NO ONE CAN SURVIVE A HEAT RAY BLAST! QUICKLY, MEN, THE SHIP...
OOH!
WE HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO LOSE. SHE MAY HAVE CONTACTED EARTH ABOUT OUR PLAN TO BLOW IT UP WITH ATO-NITRUM – HURRY!
AND WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP, SIRE?
I WAS PREPARED FOR A QUICK GET-AWAY! THE ASTRO-DIRECTOR COURSE IS SET FOR EARTH!
A FEW HOURS LATER...
SIRE VANNING, ASTRO-DIRECTOR INDICATOR REGISTERS OUR APPROACH TO EARTH SOON!
YES, YES! THERE'S A HIGH OVERCAST, SAME AS THAT AROUND OUTER VOID Z! BUT CIRCLE AROUND!
AYE, SIRE! LOOK, THE ASTRO-DIRECTOR REGISTERS EARTH EXACTLY TWENTY MILOS BELOW!
GOOD! NOW TO RELEASE THIS ATO-NITRUM BOMB!
THERE! WE'LL SWOOP DOWN BELOW THE OVERCAST FOR A LOOK AT THE RESULT! HAH! THEY'LL BE RIPE FOR AN INVASION OF MY MUTANT ARMY, EH?
AYE! I'M DIVING, SIRE!
LOOK AT IT! DIRECT HIT! BUILDINGS SMASHED, PEOPLE RUNNING... WAIT! SIRE! SIRE! IT'S NOT EARTH! IT – IT'S OUR OWN PLANET WE'VE HIT!
WHAT!


THEN...
ATTENTION, LOR VANNING! THIS IS MYSTA! I THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THAT IS YOUR OWN PLANET YOU'VE JUST DESTROYED! BEFORE YOU DISCOVERED ME LEAVING YOUR SHIP, I RESET YOUR ASTRO-DIRECTOR!
BUT I BLASTED YOU—YOU SHOULD BE DEAD—I...
NO! MY CLOTHES WERE TREATED AGAINST HEAT BLASTS—BUT NOW...
WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN! WE'VE BEEN FLYING IN A CIRCLE! HOW COULD WE WIN AGAINST MYSTA!
SIRE, CONTROLS ARE OUT—WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!
LATER, ON EARTH...
LOR VANNING DEAD—HIS MUTANT ARMY DESTROYED. I-I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND, TECHNICIAN!
THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DIRECTOR GARRO!
MYSTA, IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

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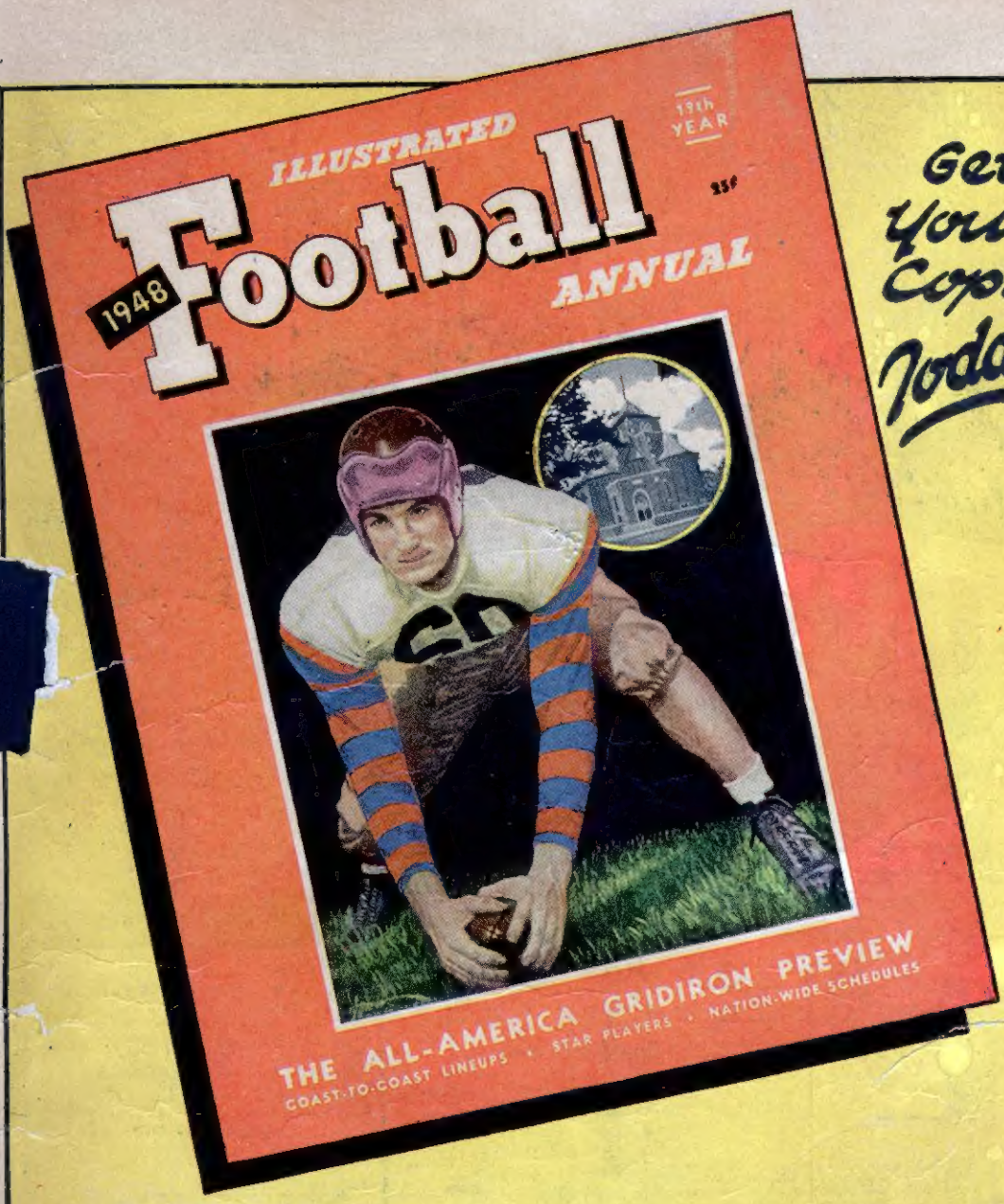

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